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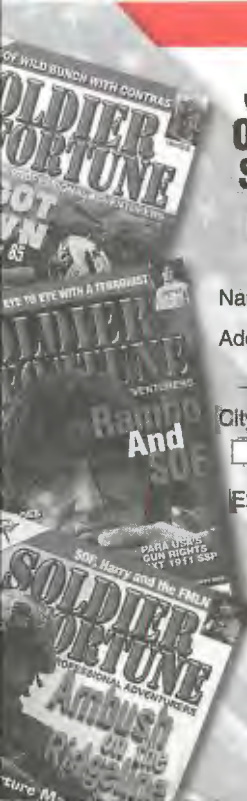

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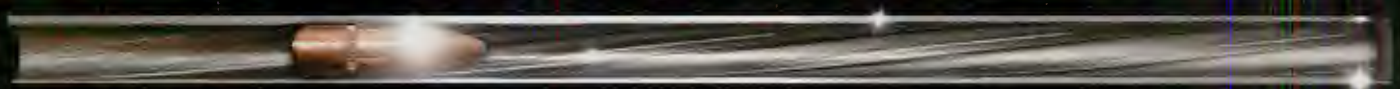

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AMERICA AT WAR

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By Dick Couch

On the Cover: A Rhodesian soldier holds a FN MAG machine gun while on patrol. Photo by Tom Argyle.

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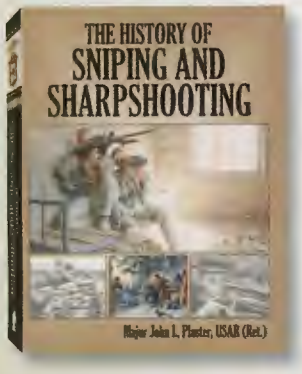

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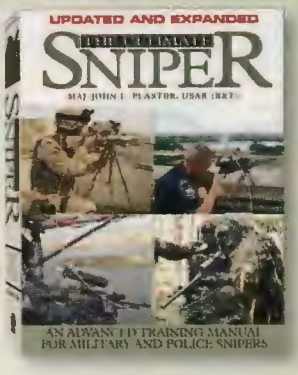
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

NRA–ILA: "Yes We Can . . . Ban Guns." Obama Announces Gun Ban Agenda before the Final Vote Count Is In

By Wayne LaPierre, Executive Vice President, National Rifle Association and Chris W. Cox, Executive Director, NRA Institute for Legislative Action

Senator Barack Obama's presidential campaign slogan, "the audacity of hope," should have instead been "the audacity of deceit." After months of telling the American people that he supports the Second Amendment, and only hours after being declared the president-elect, the Obama transition team website announced an agenda taken straight from the anti-gun lobby—four initiatives designed to ban guns and drive law-abiding firearm manufacturers and dealers out of business.

"Making the expired federal assault weapons ban permanent." Perhaps no other firearm issue has been more dishonestly portrayed by gun prohibitionists. Notwithstanding their predictions that the ban's expiration in 2004 would bring about the end of civilization, for the last four years the nation's murder rate has been lower than anytime since the mid-1960s. Studies for Congress, the Congressional Research Service, the National Institute of Justice, the National Academy of Sciences, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found no evidence that gun prohibition or gun control reduces crime. Guns that were affected by the ban are used in only a tiny fraction of violent crime—about 35 times more people are murdered without any sort of firearm (knives, bare hands, etc.) than with "assault weapons." Obama says that "assault weapons" are machine guns that "belong on foreign battlefields," but that is a lie; the guns are only semi-automatic, and they are not used by a military force anywhere on the planet.

"Repeal the Tiahrt Amendment." The amendment—endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police—prohibits the release of federal firearm tracing information to anyone other than a law enforcement agency conducting a bona fide criminal investigation. Anti-gun activists oppose the restriction, because it prevents them from obtaining tracing information and using it in frivolous lawsuits against law-abiding firearm manufacturers. Their lawsuits seek to obtain huge financial judgments against firearm manufacturers when a criminal uses a gun to inflict harm, even though the manufacturers have complied with all applicable laws.

"Closing the gun show loophole." There is no "loophole." Under federal law, a firearms dealer must conduct a background check on anyone to whom he sells a gun, regardless of where the sale takes place. A person who is not a dealer may sell a gun from his personal collection without conducting a check. Gun prohibitionists claim that many criminals obtain guns from gun shows, though the most recent federal survey of convicted felons put the figure at only 0.7 percent. Prohibitionists also claim that non-dealers should be required to conduct checks when selling guns at shows, but the legislation they support goes far beyond imposing that lone requirement. In fact, anti-gun members of Congress voted against that limited measure, holding out for a broader bill intended to drive shows out of business.

"Making guns in this country childproof." "Childproof" is a codeword for a variety of schemes designed to prevent the sale of firearms by imposing impossible or highly expensive design requirements, such as biometric shooter-identification systems. While no one opposes keeping children safe, the fact is that accidental firearm-related deaths among children have decreased 86 percent since 1975, even as the numbers of children and guns have risen dramatically. Today, the chances of a child being killed in a firearm accident are less than one in a million.

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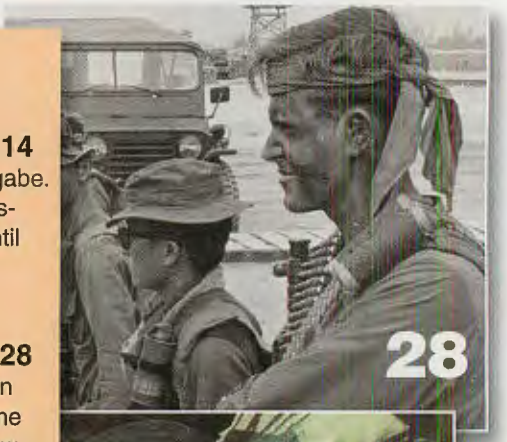

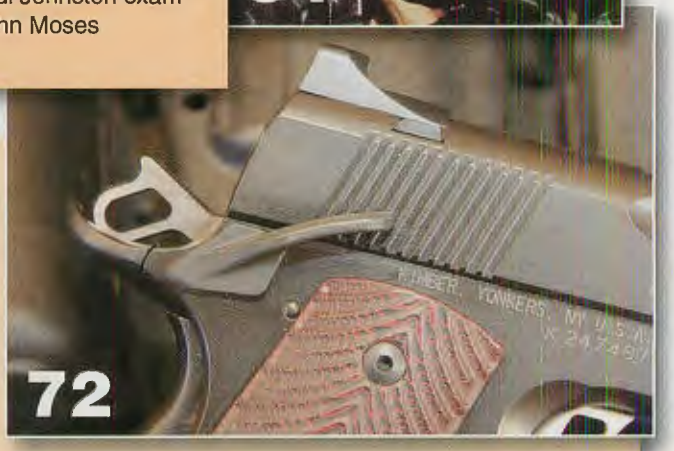

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MORE GEORGIA ON A *SOF*ER'S MIND

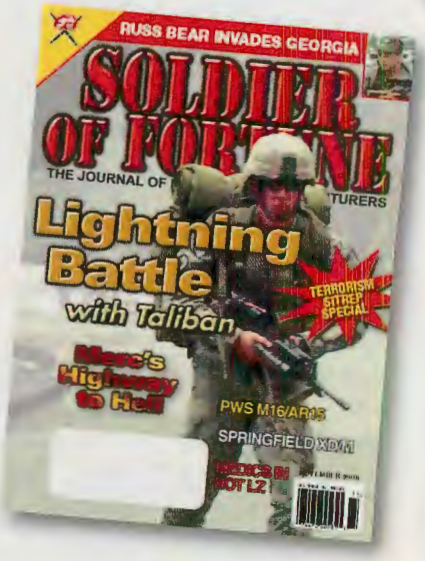
I can't figure out what happened in Georgia. What were they thinking?

If the problem is Ossetian bandits, the answer is light infantry and sensors. You restrict their movement and hunt them down. NATO could provide the material needed for that. That's a low-level problem for police and border troops.

If the problem is retaking South Ossetia, how could the Georgians look at their forces and think they could win? Didn't they believe the Russians would attack? No plans to seal the Roki Tunnel? No plans to play GM 100 on Russian columns on narrow roads in steep valleys with rocket barrages? Mines? No prior preparation of the terrain to maximize the chances of success? Occupation plans? What about Abkhazia military/occupation plans? This makes Saddam's Gulf War planning look brilliant.

Or was it a setup to disgrace the Georgian military leadership so they could be removed? I can't believe any competent advisor would EVER tell the Georgians what they were planning would work. "You're doing a helluva job, Brownie" is a gross understatement of competence.

Larry A. Altersitz



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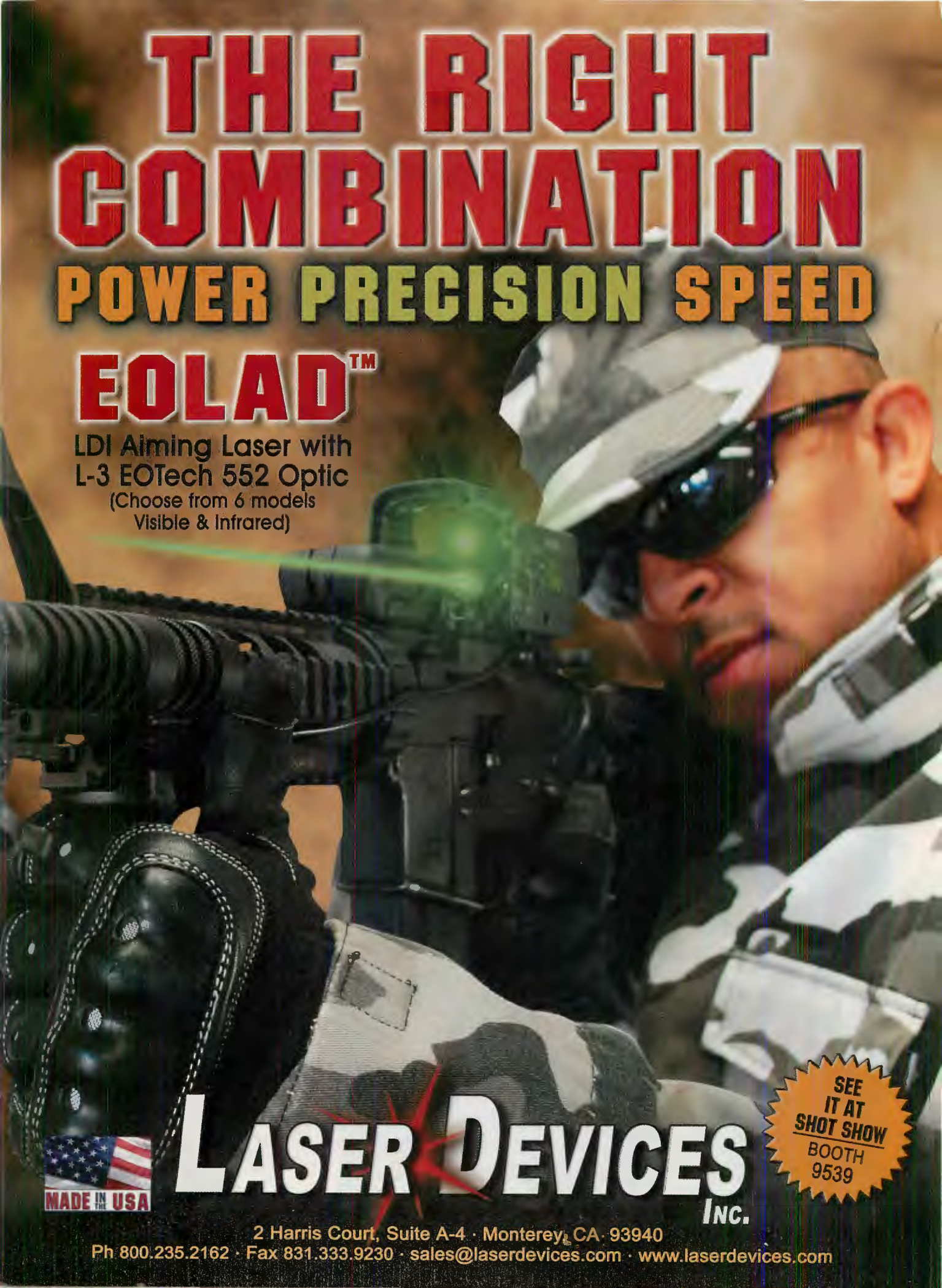
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THEY DUMPED COMANCHE FOR THIS?

Back in 2004, the Army cancelled the ultra-high-tech Comanche stealth helicopter in favor of a new Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter. The big reason? Cost. Fast forward four and a half years, and now the Army is cancelling its Comanche replacement, the ARH-70 Arapaho, due to cost overruns.

In other words, they dumped the Comanche for what was supposed to be an easy and cheap alternative – which has now been cancelled because after a 70 percent cost overrun, the manufacturer couldn't get it right! Considering that the Comanche could have been well on the way to being fielded by our troops by now had it not been cancelled, this is outrageous.

STEVE SCHREINER ON NRA BOARD

Steve Schreiner, the President of the Firearms Coalition of Colorado, was recently elected to fill an unexpired term on NRA's Board of Directors. However, he still has to run in the next election in order to win a full term. In the upcoming Board of Directors election, be sure to vote for Steve Schreiner.

SINCE OBAMA WON...

In the 24 hours since Barack Obama won the 2008 election:

* Hamas has fired almost three dozen rockets from Gaza into Israel.

* Russia has announced plans to forward-deploy Iskander missiles targeted against America's missile defense bases in Eastern Europe.

* Iran started talking tough about American helicopters flying near their border.

HOW MUCH FOR AN "AS-IS" BOAT?

We note that two dozen refurbished Whiskey-class submarines are being offered for sale as pleasure craft. Cost: $497,000. It's not bad for a 1950s design. Here's the bad news: All the cool stuff's been taken off. If you're thinking about a new pleasure craft that may be a little out of the ordinary, go to

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Did Jimmy Carter's CIA Sting Destroy A Cold War Ally?

How Mugabe Became The Castro of Africa

By Joseph C. Smith

THE CIA FOLDS ITS TENT

In stunned disbelief, Africa's most famous mercenary, Col. "Mad" Mike Hoare, watched the CIA fold its tent in Africa circa 1976–77.

"Almost overnight, the CIA—once the world's greatest intelligence-gathering service and a major tool in American administration—ceased to count in the affairs of Africa. This came, regrettably, at the precise moment when the future of Africa south of the Equator was in the melting pot, and those of us who had reason to know the CIA's potential for good… mourned its passing." said Hoare in his 2008 foreword for the re-printed *CONGO WARRIORS*.

The fiercely anti-communist Hoare, whose mercenary "Wild Geese" purged the Congo of communists in 1964–65 (see November *SOF*), never guessed the CIA hadn't folded its tent but had simply begun working the other side of the street.

Under President Jimmy Carter, in 1977 the CIA launched a massive sting operation bent on destroying tiny, anti-communist Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) so that Carter's choice—Marxist Robert Mugabe—could be installed by any means. And they did it "in the clear" inside Rhodesia in one of the slickest spy operations ever.

All of central and southern Africa

Continued on page 14

Capt. Joseph Columbus Smith briefs machine gunners from B Company, 1 Bn, Rhodesian African Rifles, in late 1978 before an operation against communist terrorists bent on seizing control in Rhodesia.

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Jimmy Carter's CIA

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was under communist onslaught, i.e., "liberation movements" from 1960 onward. The Russians, and later the Chinese, both hungry for strategic minerals, partially or totally sponsored and armed ALL the "liberation" movements that swept Africa.

TARGETING COMMUNIST CAMPS

Montana-size Rhodesia, just north of South Africa, began resisting a Marxist takeover bid from 1965 through the end of 1979. With the same British heritage spirit that built the empire, Rhodesians repelled the commies by vigorous army and police patrolling in the Tribal Trust Lands and precision "externals" (Rhodesian military operations which targeted terrorist camps in countries bordering on Rhodesia–RKB) on communist camps in the Marxist sanctuaries of Mozambique and Zambia.

Communist terrorists (we called them CTs) invaded Rhodesia in groups of six to 60, led by Marxist political commissars. They often raced across Lake Kariba in East German Zodiacs to land terrorists in Rhodesia. (The terror leader of one of these two groups was Marxist Robert Mugabe, who has held Zimbabwe in an iron grip for 28 years.)

With just a few hundred thousand whites and six million blacks, and the world against them, tiny Rhodesia was running short of men—not expertise—and began recruiting "rifles" from outside their borders, including "Yank" veterans of Vietnam like myself. We were fully integrated into Rhodesia's Army and police units that were then the toughest anti-insurgency force on the planet.

BLACK ANTI-COMMUNISTS

Lest anyone hallucinate about a snow white force, more than 70 percent of both our police and army were black Africans, effective BLACK anti-communists who fought shoulder to shoulder with whites. In the last few years of the war we had black officers. I had the privilege of commanding African soldiers in the oldest unit, the Rhodesian African Rifles, for the last 37 months of the Rhodesian bush war.

Jimmy Carter, who was inaugurated in January 1977, assigned civil rights icon Andrew Young the portfolio of U.S. Ambassador to the UN, and designated him African affairs point man. Almost immediately it became clear that Carter and Young had

Mugabe in 1991

anointed life-long Marxist Robert Mugabe—the most sinister of the contenders for leadership—to be Zimbabwe/Rhodesia's new leader. They bowed to the pressure from neighboring "one-party" state African dictators who insisted that "Comrade Mugabe" take the helm next door.

Carter also decided to scuttle Rhodesia via a massive CIA sting operation, in which famous author Robin Moore was the guidon. Moore, who created the legend of the Green Berets with his book *The Green Berets*, also authored *The Happy Hooker* and *The French Connection*. (*The Green Berets* inspired a movie of the same name starring John Wayne.)

THE MOST HIGH-PROFILE ANTI-COMMUNIST OF 1977

When Robin Moore set foot in Rhodesia in 1977, he was the most high-profile anti-communist and allegedly pro-Rhodesian American in country. And he had in tow a real life, active duty, Green Beret hero of the Vietnam War—Col. Vernon Gillespie. Rumor had it that John Wayne was modeled after Col. Gillespie, and add to this mix Robin's stunner of a wife —actress Mary Olga—and you had the most exiting— and seemingly providential—trio to hit Salisbury, Rhodesia since the Rhodesian bush war began.

For Rhodesians, already at war a decade, this glamorous trio must have seemed like the second coming, and just in the nick of time. Nearly out of resources and funds, Rhodesia had expended hundreds of lives in a classic Cold War chapter for an apparently ungrateful West.

But the new gang in town offered hope of recognition by the USA and the Brits as well as redemption in the eyes of the world. Col. Gillespie, while in mufti, openly presented himself as an active-duty Green Beret colonel, and I was told presented himself as an element of the "Company" (CIA), that was fighting secretly to lift sanctions and bring Rhodesia into the mainstream.

"THE CRIPPLED EAGLES"

With kind of a "wink wink," he left the impression he was a savior who could make miracles happen if only he were given access to the big picture. Army headquarters, thinking the "cavalry had arrived," gave him *carte blanche* and permission to travel the country. Soon the glamorous trio was ensconced in a Salisbury mansion Robin Moore re-named "The American Embassy of Good Will" and headquarters for an organization called "The Crippled Eagles"—an organization allegedly sympathetic to those Americans (like me) who were bitter about their loss in Vietnam and keen to win a Cold War chapter (he had that part right).

To herd us in, Moore broadcast a standing invitation to homesick Americans on R & R (rest and recreation) to show up any weekend for free cold beer and hot dogs and hamburgers. Soon "The Embassy" was a magnet for any Rhodesian soldier or officer back from the "sharp end" for a few days. Of course, after a few cold ones, they talked.

COL. GILLESPIE AND HIS SILLY PLOY

My only encounter with Col. Gillespie happened at a training site near Essexvale, Rhodesia in the first half of 1977. Six of us "Yanks" were part of a

Continued on page 18

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Jimmy Carter's CIA

Continued from page 16

large classical war exercise when out of nowhere, Col. Gillespie arrived with an Army chauffeur and asked that all the "Yanks" be sent to him. His mission had the blessing of Army Headquarters in Salisbury.

There was something vaguely sinister and transparent about Gillespie and his silly ploy to gather information about each of us. He told his fellow countrymen he was trying to get the word out about Rhodesia's lonely struggle, and we could help the cause by filling out information on his "Hometowner" press release forms. As former US Army officers, we were all familiar and comfortable with the "Hometowner" release format.

Special Forces officer Lt. Joseph C. Smith (left) receiving his second Bronze Star medal for achievement (Aug. 1969) in Vietnam from 5th Special Forces Group commander Col. Alexander Lemberes. Smith served as information officer for all Green Berets in Vietnam, and escorted the press to remote Special Forces camps in the Central Highlands.

Trooper Joseph Patrick Byrne, killed in October 1978, was one of the last of the seven Americans killed in action during Rhodesia's 14-year Cold War struggle against a Soviet/Chinese-inspired insurgency.

As the former information officer and spokesman for all the Green Berets in Vietnam, I was intimately familiar with the form. You printed your name, home address, and military unit on the form, which was then sent to your hometown paper. In a few weeks the local paper published

Continued on page 20

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Jimmy Carter's CIA

Continued from page 18

a small blurb about Specialist Numb Gums getting transferred to Ft. Bragg. Mom and Dad loved it

REFUSING TO KOWTOW TO A MOLE

Gillespie also wanted tape recordings from all of us so he could send the tapes to "friendly" radio stations. Obvious to me, but not to my fellow officers, was that few Rhodesia-friendly news outlets existed in the USA or anyplace else. What Gillespie wanted, of course, was information he could send to Langley, Virginia about us Yanks. But was Langley the only recipient of the information?

To my shock, the other Yanks jumped to Gillespie's request; but I did an "about face" and walked out of the tent. Of course, Col. Gillespie invited us all to the "American Embassy" in Salisbury on our next R & R.

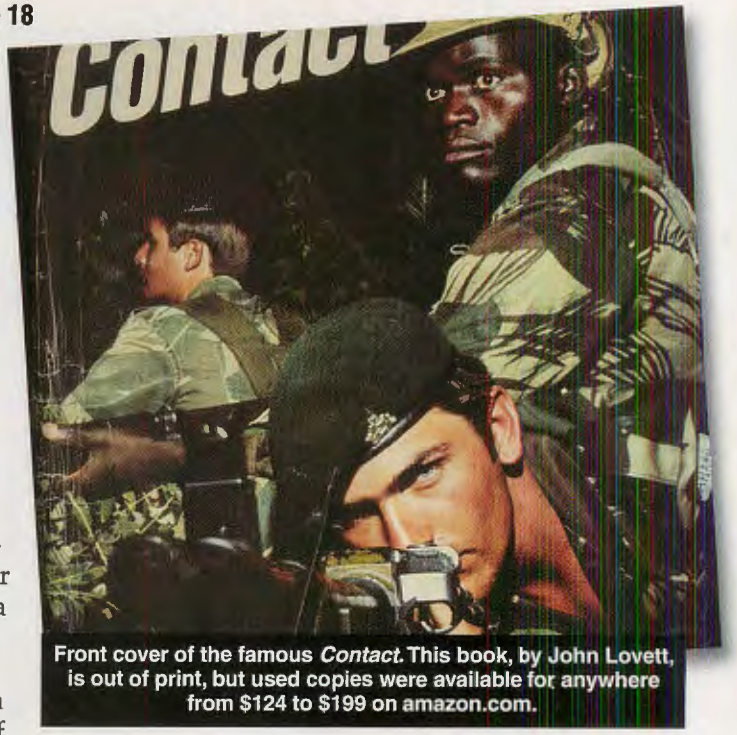
Really curious, I DID show up at the pseudo-embassy on my next R & R, and was immediately met by Robin Moore and his dazzling wife Mary Olga. After a few pleasantries, Robin directed me toward the cold beer and hamburgers. But I hadn't taken two steps before I was mobbed by a half dozen photographers who took my picture from every angle. Not a word about "Hometowners" from them. They said nothing and disappeared as quickly as they appeared.

I joined the other Rhodesian soldiers, mostly bearded Selous Scouts, and shook hands with their famous commander, Col. Ron Reid-Daly. It was an honor. I was the only Yank that afternoon. But, as they say, I knew I had been "made," so I left and never returned. (When I finished my 37-month tour at the war's end and returned to the USA, I discovered I had been blackballed by every security firm that had any connection or contract with the US government.)

THE SLICKEST OF SCHEMES

But Moore and Gillespie had the slickest of schemes. March in a real war hero along with the world's most famous anti-communist novelist, and throw a lifeline to a drowning nation. And do it in the open, in the clear, and it works from all angles. Good Rhodesian soldiers and officers, convinced they are saving their nation, funnel valuable intelligence to Moore and Gillespie.

Unit names and troop strengths. Tactics, weapons, troop movements and future operations plans. The usual. All to CIA HQ in Langley, Virginia, but did it ever reach the hands of a Robert Mugabe or the other terror faction leader—Joshua Nkomo? Did any of that spy data end up killing Rhodesians or Americans?



Front cover of the famous *Contact*. This book, by John Lovett, is out of print, but used copies were available for anywhere from $124 to $199 on amazon.com.

CIA INVOLVED IN TOPPLING RHODESIA

Seven Americans were killed fighting communists armed with AK-47s and shoulder-fired antitank rockets (RPG rockets). They were Sgt. Hugh P. McCall, Sgt. Richard L. Biederman, Corporal John A. Coey, Trooper George C. Clarke, Trooper Frank P. Battaglia, Trooper Stephen M. Dwyer, and Trooper Joseph P. Byrne. All saw their fight as a noble anti-communist fight for the survival of the West. Two of the Americans—Sgt. McCall and Trooper Byrne—were killed AFTER Robin Moore's entourage arrived in Salisbury.

Trooper Joseph Patrick Byrne—killed by an AK-47 round—was the favorite uncle of New Jersey businessman Rich Byrne, who still grieves and has lingering questions he planned to ask Robin Moore before the famous author died in February of 2008.

"I have long suspected that the CIA was involved in the toppling of Rhodesia and have had my suspicions about my uncle's best friend Robin Moore. There is little doubt that Gillespie was the CIA operative in the field who was throwing vital information over the fence to his case officer. One just has to wonder who else was involved in this CIA ring," said Byrne.

"The whole thing stinks. It always has. In fact, Robin opened his house up to me and I was to spend some time with him right before he became ill. I had many questions for him and he seemed receptive to answer them for me, but ended up on a ventilator a few days later. Now the truth goes with him," Byrne said.

A STORY OF BETRAYAL

"The only thing I know for certain is that Robin brought my uncle to Rhodesia and felt extremely guilty about his death. So much so that he dedicated his book *The White Tribe* to him and named the character Carey O'Donnell after him."

Digging for the truth, Rich Byrne unearthed what I call the "smoking gun." A May 2000 letter that Robin Moore sent to his mentor and hero, retired Lt. Gen. William P. Yarborough, who molded the Vietnam-era Green Berets and whose name has been linked to many CIA operations. The letter, from Gen. Yarborough's archive, is a paean by Moore to his hero on Yarborough's 88th birthday.

"...And when you mentioned Rhodesia and Ian Smith and Peter Walls to me, I got all fired up all over again. And at fifty, ten years after Vietnam, I took off for Rhodesia in 1976 after considerable briefing from you," writes Moore. "That was a

great adventure which we shared and I was always glad you saw and stayed at my 'American Embassy of Good Will.' My guys, former Berets, Brits, Aussies, Germans, Frenchmen, Foreign Legionnaires, put up a great fight alongside the Africans who wanted freedom, not a communist Mugabe and Nkomo," Moore continued.

"Sad to say, I couldn't beat a combination of Jimmy Carter, Andy Young, the lefty Brits led by Dr. Owens and, of course, the adder in my own fruit basket, Vernon Gillespie (who of course was only obeying his orders from Jimmy Carter's CIA). That was why I did not give the go ahead to the many Americans and others who wanted to take him out on a patrol from which he would not return.

AN EXECUTION ORDER

"I don't know whether I ever told you," said Moore, "but the guys even tried to get Mary Olga to give the execution order. Fortunately, by then she had enough experience behind her to realize these guys didn't joke. They meant it, they just wanted orders from what they considered to be the top of their group to do it," Moore concluded.

Moore left Rhodesia sometime in 1978. We held our first majority rule election in April 1979, and it was deemed to fair and open by international observers. Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa garnered 54 percent of the votes, including mine. A referendum before the election indicated 85 percent of the whites were in favor of majority rule, but NOT one-party Marxist rule.

After the election, Zimbabwe /Rhodesia held its collective breath and waited for British recognition and lifting of sanctions. But behind the scenes, Ambassador Andrew Young lobbied for a second election to ensure Marxist Robert Mugabe actually came to power to appease the wishes of post-colonial African dictators in the neighborhood.

TRIBUTE TO THE WHITE TRIBE

While the fate of tiny Rhodesia teetered in the balance from April to September, the normally high profile Robin Moore seemed to drop off the radar. Not a peep. Did someone make him an offer he couldn't refuse? Twelve years later, when Zimbabwe was lost to a Marxist tyrant, Robin wrote *The White Tribe* and dedicated it to Rich's uncle—Trooper Joseph Patrick Byrne. Publishing the book in 1991, Robin says in the foreword, "It is the story of betrayal of pro-Western Rhodesia to the 'stabilizing' communists in Africa."

The novel seems to be a very close fictional overlay of the scene I observed. Novel character Alvin Glenlord could be Vernon Gillespie and Robin Moore could be the Roger Masefield character. In real time, Robin observed Gillespie spying on Rhodesia and made no public outcry in 1977, '78, or '79.

Gillespie was not the only Green Beret operating at the time in Rhodesia, I learned quite by accident more than a decade after returning to the USA. As a former Green Beret and Vietnam veteran, I was a member of

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Jimmy Carter's CIA Continued from page 21

Chapter XV—San Antonio, of the Special Forces Association. We held our annual picnics at Canyon Lake.

At the 2002 event, Chapter President Armando Canales brought one of our members over and said to me, "Mike was also in Rhodesia and you two guys ought to meet." Immediately Mike asked me if I knew a certain Rhodesian officer and, stunned and excited, I said, "Yes, he was one of my commanders! How do you know him?" A long and painful silence followed and I stupidly asked, "Were there many of us (Green Berets) over there?"

Lt. R. J. Cook, a platoon leader with B Company, drinking with his men.

ON THE WRONG SIDE

"Yes," Mike replied, and another sad silence enveloped us before Mike asked—without wanting an answer, "I was on the wrong side, wasn't I?"

I didn't respond. We never spoke again. Why would we? No anger. Had I been in uniform, and ordered to go to Rhodesia, of course I would have gone. I have no idea what Mike and the other Special Forces guys were doing in Rhodesia.

In an 8 March, 1980, San Antonio *Express News* article, I predicted Jimmy Carter's selection—Robert Mugabe—would become "The Castro of Africa."

My predictions have come true.

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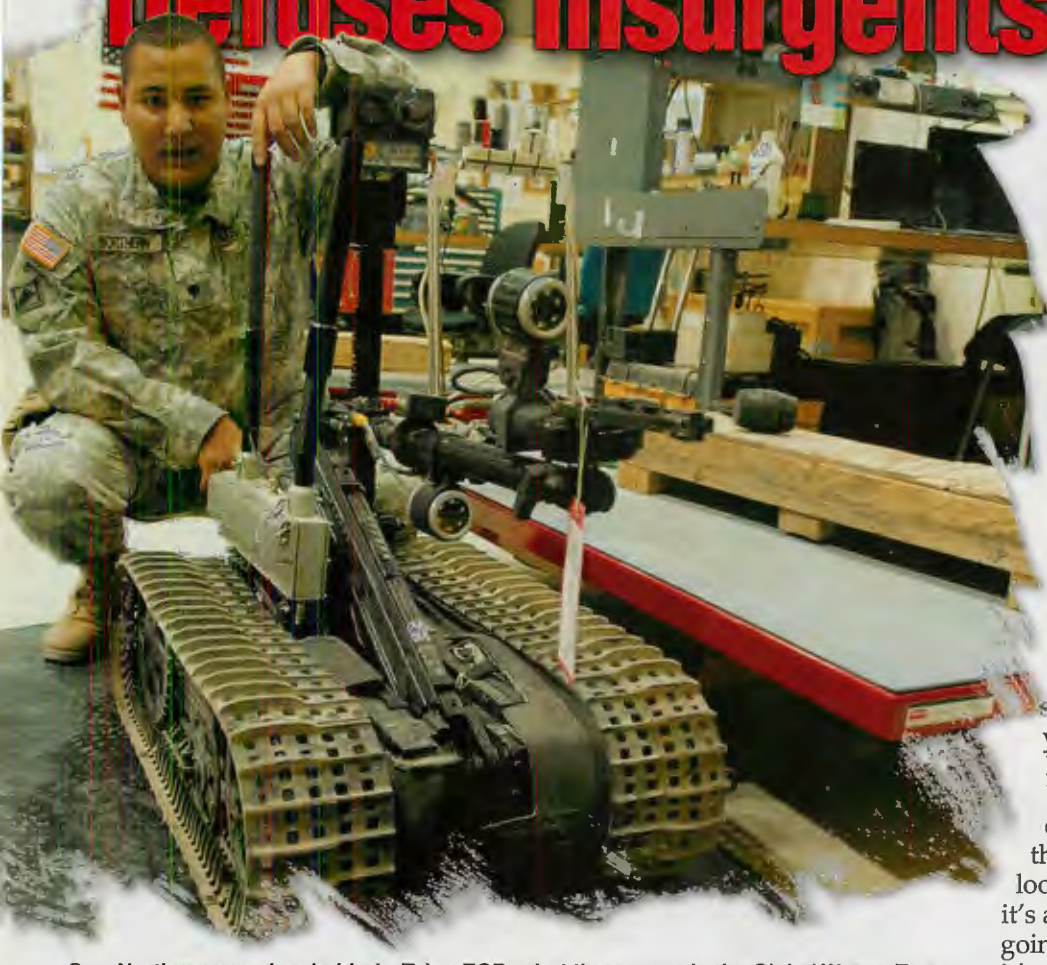

Spc. Northern crouches behind a Talon EOD robot that serves in the Global War on Terror.

Text and Photos by Sgt. David Turner, USA, Multi-National Division – Center

A LINGERING MENACE

The threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is still very real, especially to the Soldiers who travel the roads of Iraq and conduct dismounted patrols in its neighborhoods. Improvements in tactics and technology and operations to capture or kill bomb makers and emplacers have diminished the threat, but safeguarding Soldiers and civilians from IEDs is still a vital part of the Task Force Mountain mission.

Multi-National Division–Center (MNC–C) coordinates several teams focused on neutralizing the threat from IEDs. Capt. Richard Turvey, operations and targeting officer of the IED-defeat cell, manages and supports these teams from his location at MND–C headquarters at Camp Victory, Baghdad. "We provide the capability to go up above division level to corps, or even all the way back to the States to get questions answered," said Turvey, of Three Rivers, Mich.

FEWER ATTACKS

"We provide training for how to react to IEDs, provide counter-IED training – how to spot them (tactics, techniques, and procedures [TTP]). If we see a new trend, say there's a new trend going on up north, we push that information to the guys in our area and hopefully … we can come up with a way to react to it that can become a new TTP, a new standard," he said.

The threat of IEDs is gradually decreasing overall in Iraq, but it's also changing, said Turvey. "Compared to last year, we've been lucky here in MND–Center. [IED attacks] have been down over the past couple of weeks, about 30 percent versus the previous 90 days, and if you look at the numbers from last year, it's a significant decrease. I'm not going to say there is no threat, but it's getting less."

"We've been finding a lot of caches; we've gotten better at detecting IEDs, but as we get better, they get better. Just as soon as we think we've got something beat, they change one of their TTPs or they get somebody back, or someone all of the sudden comes in that's a very well-trained bomb maker or bomb emplacer," he said.

BUT NEW TRICKS EMERGE

Recent emerging trends include magnetic IEDs attached to vehicles and "flashlight" IEDs – ordinary flashlights filled with explosive and connected to a trip wire, needing only to be picked up to detonate. There is also the continuing threat of deep-buried IEDs, some placed months or years ago.

Continued on page 26

IN JUST THE BLINK OF AN EYE YOU CAN LOSE AN EYE

April 2006. Nighttime mission outside Fallujah. "That blast was so strong it threw me around like no tomorrow..." This gunner was ready with Revision Sawfly® Eyewear. His vehicle was rocked. Shrapnel flew. His sight was saved. IED's don't come with warning signals. You have to be ready. Ready for the worst. Ready with the best. And that's Revision Eyewear. Powerful ballistic protection. Flawless distortion-free optics.

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IED Defeat Cell Defuses Insurgents' Tactics

Continued from page 24

The targets of IED attacks are also changing. Coalition soldiers used to be the main targets; now, Iraqi security forces (ISF) and government leaders are becoming targets of criminal and extremist groups. Al-Qaeda in Iraq is less active in the MND–C area of operations, but other extremist groups in the area have shown the will to use IEDs.

To help the ISF combat these threats, the IED-defeat cell is helping combat brigades train local Iraqi army and Iraqi police forces. In Babil province, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division operates Lion Claw Academy, using the newest tactics and technology to train route clearance and IED defeat. In addition to explosive ordnance disposal robots, the MND–C IED-defeat cell helps by coordinating the use of bomb-detection dogs.

SENDING THE GEAR

A similar training course is conducted in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) area of operations as well. New machines and techniques emerge, and the IED-defeat cell ensures the brigades get the tools they need.

"That's kind of what I see our role being, the longer we're here and the more partnering we do," said Turvey. "We are going to provide more training resources and oversight to what the brigades are doing." Brigades often have as few as one or two Soldiers dedicated to IED-defeat; MND–C has 28 personnel focused on the task and ready to support them.

Spc. Steven Northern, a robotics technician from McAlister, Okla., works with a Talon explosive ordnance disposal robot at the Joint Robotic Repair Detachment on Camp Victory, Baghdad, Iraq. The Talon is the most widely used EOD robot currently in theater, and the JRRD is one of three facilities that keep them working. Approximately 3,000 brave young robots are currently serving in Iraq.

"RED HASH" ALERTS FROM CSI: BAGHDAD

The IED-defeat cell also gets support from other agencies to perform its mission. Task Force (TF) Troy provides counter-IED training for Soldiers, and civilian contractors in the Division Support Team provide valuable expertise on ways to detect and destroy devices. Both TF Mountain and the TF Troy issue "Red Hash" reports to alert units to emerging enemy tactics.

TF Mountain even employs law enforcement professionals to perform sensitive-site analysis, similar to police forensics, which helps both coalition and IA soldiers use legal means to prosecute terrorists. "They are 'CSI Baghdad,' basically," said Turvey.

A MORPHING MISSION

Turvey said that as TF Mountain's mission continues to change, so will his team's. "It's actually kind of a morphing mission," he said. "When we first got here, we assumed our role was going to be to target networks of IED manufacturers and emplacers, but as we're here longer … the role of our cell changes, because we can work with different civilian agencies that work for us, partnering with the IA or the IP, providing instruction in different areas."

Task Force Mountain's IED-defeat cell helps field new equipment such as "bomb-bots" to help combat brigades fight the changing threat of IEDs.

"We're just a conduit to these other organizations," said Turvey. "We're kind of like [the brigades'] action arm up here. If we can't provide any assistance, then we're really of no use to them. We don't want to just be up here gathering data."

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BULLETIN BOARD Continued from page 12

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IT'S BACK!

Barack Obama and Joe Biden have, it seems, decided to make their push for more gun control part of their agenda, as *SOF* and the NRA, among others, have warned. Is it any wonder that since he was elected, guns and ammo are now flying off the shelves? Of course, within days of the heat coming down, parts of his agenda were being scrubbed from his website.

ANOTHER SECRET BLOWN...

It seems that when it comes to secret efforts in the War on Terror, the *New York Times* cannot help itself. Reports were that the NYT may have been responsible in the past for leaking the NSA's surveillance efforts intended to help prevent the next 9/11. Has it now blown a new secret? It seems that the Administration had given Special Operations Command (SOCOM) the go-ahead to get al-Qaeda in a number of countries, including Syria, Somalia, and Pakistan.

Now... well, let's just say that the incoming Obama Administration probably wasn't likely to allow such raids, anyhow. We can hope that this will shame some of these countries into dealing with the terrorists.

DO-NOTHING KSK?

The Germans have historically been known to have some very competent special operations forces. One of these forces, GSG-9, pulled

KSK Coat of Arms. Bundeswehr graphic.

Continued on page 71

An Afghan national police officer and Pfc. Jason Hovater, Chosin Company, 2-503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, pull security while on patrol in Chiriac Valley, Afghanistan, 24 October, 2007. Hovater was one of the nine paratroopers KIA during the firefight at Wanat. Photo by Staff Sgt. Marcus Quartermain, USA

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SOG SOLD OUT BY NVA TRAITOR

SOF REVEALED DEADLY SOG MISSIONS

By John Stryker Meyer

NUMBER OF COMPROMISED MISSIONS A MYSTERY

During the eight-year secret war in Vietnam, when Green Beret-led reconnaissance teams and company-size elements ran top secret missions across the fence into Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam, many of those missions were compromised before the Military Assistance Command Vietnam–Studies and Observations Group (MACV–SOG) units landed on the ground.

Continued on page 30

"Kingbees," old HH-34Ds flown by the 219th Special Operations Squadron of the South Vietnamese Air Force, supported SOG missions, inserting and extracting teams—often under enemy fire, resupplying SOG radio sites and providing general troop transport. Here, Capt. Tuong, center, and other Kingbee pilots and crew members stand beside a Sikorsky HH-34D in the fall of 1968 at the Quang Tri launch site for MACV–SOG teams operating out of FOB 1 in Phu Bai. Photo credit: John Stryker Meyer

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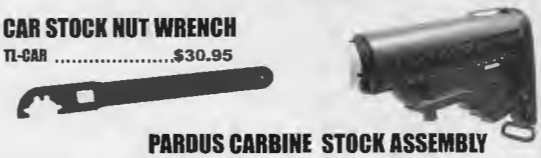

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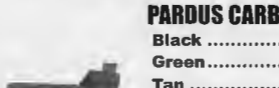

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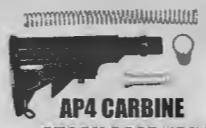

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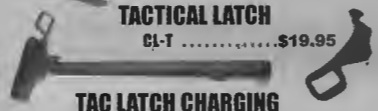

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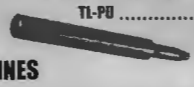

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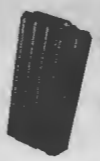

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 Continued from page 28

Exactly how many missions were compromised, or how many Green Berets and their courageous indigenous counterparts were killed or wounded in action as a result of these heinous actions will never be known, due to the highly classified nature of SOG, its tightly compartmentalized command structure and extremely narrow channels of intelligence and counterintelligence reporting.

Thus, one of the hidden horrors of running highly classified missions where intelligence reports were delivered promptly to the White House is this: there are few paper trails to follow and the truth about the degree of compromise, if it ever was documented, will likely never be known.

More than 20 years ago, *Soldier of Fortune* magazine was the first publication in the country to print stories about the highly classified and deadly SOG missions. Recently gathered information from four separate sources confirms the long-held fears of many SOG Green Berets, who ran what many believe were the deadliest missions during that war where casualties exceeded 100 percent among SOG soldiers.

It's important for yesterday's warriors to know about the compromises, and have the hope that tomorrow's warriors and command structures will be more diligent to guard against possible compromises in future covert operations.

Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau, at FOB 1 Phu Bai, shortly after he was assigned to RT Virginia. In December 1968, as the radio operator on RT Idaho, he received a radio call from an English-speaking Russian while on a SOG mission in the DMZ. Photo credit: Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau

SOVIETS ON THE GROUND

Evidence of Soviets and their commie pals in Laos, North Vietnam and the demilitarized zone (DMZ) was reported early.

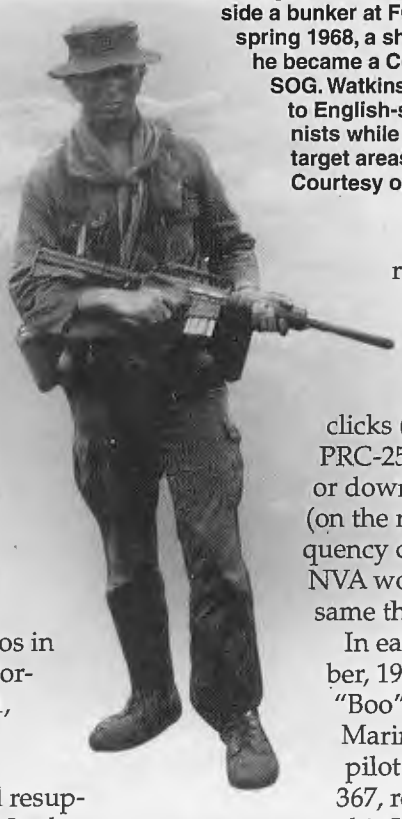
SOG recon man Charles Berg said that when he flew visual reconnaissance in that area of Laos and the DMZ in 1967, he observed Soviet aircraft on more than one occasion. During one flight, "I told my pilot to get close to it because I wanted to shoot it down with my CAR-15," Berg said. The pilot didn't oblige, "but, we knew those bastards were there."

During an operation in Laos in November 1968, run out of forward operating base (FOB) 1, Phu Bai, Recon Team (RT) Idaho heard Soviet pilots on their radio conducting aerial resupplies to their men and their North Vietnamese Army (NVA) allies in Laos.

In November and December 1968, SFC Pat Watkins was flying Covey (the SOG forward air controller) for FOB 1 missions over Laos and the DMZ, where he regularly encountered English-speaking North Vietnamese on the day's operational FM frequency.

"It got so bad," Watkins told *SOF* in an October 2008 interview, "that when we arrived over the area of operations (AO), they'd greet me on the radio. I told them to stop playing that Vietnamese music on our frequency and at least play some rock and roll.

"However, it got real serious when we went operational working with a team on the ground. Then, they'd interfere with our radio transmissions. If we told the team to go up two clicks (on their PRC-25 FM radio) or down two clicks (on the radio frequency dial), the NVA would do the same thing."



Staff Sgt. Pat Watkins standing outside a bunker at FOB 3, Khe Sanh, in spring 1968, a short while before he became a Covey rider for SOG. Watkins regularly talked to English-speaking communists while flying over SOG target areas. Photo credit: Courtesy of Louis DeSeta

In early December, 1968, George "Boo" Miller, a Marine gunship pilot with HML-367, received a call on his UHF frequency from an English-speaking man during a SOG extraction who knew the famous Marine gunship crew's call sign: "Scarface."

"He called me several times during the extraction of an FOB 1 recon team," Miller said in October 2008. "I had run out of ammo and rockets and was making low passes so my door gunners could continue to fire on the enemy and throw hand grenades at them."

A COMMIE IN THE DMZ

During one of those last passes, Miller observed a Soviet officer in the DMZ, just east of the team's LZ. "I'll never forget it. He was a large, white male in a gray-colored uniform with red epaulets on his shoulders," Miller said. "He was standing in the middle of a small clearing just east of the team. My co-pilot also saw him when we made a second pass to confirm what we had seen."

However, when he returned to "fire him up," the Soviet, "was gone." After successfully extracting the team, Miller reported his sighting to a Marine general at Vande-

Continued on page 32

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SOG SOLD OUT BY NVA TRAITOR

Continued from page 30

grift base. He heard nothing further on that sighting.

About six months later, during a mission in the DMZ, Lynne M. Black, Jr., the One-Zero (team leader) of RT Idaho and his One-One (assistant team leader) Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau observed a white male, bathing with a few women in a stream at the bottom of a large series of mountains. The Soviet was too far away for their weapons and Black couldn't muster up any tactical air assets to nail him.

A month later, on another DMZ target, LeTourneau received a call on his FM PRC-25 radio that he'll never forget. Speaking in English, with an accent, a Caucasian male said, "RT Idaho. Come in RT Idaho." Because it was near noontime, LeTourneau thought it might be Covey doing a routine commo check. The only problem—there was no Covey in the AO.

A STRANGE VOICE KNEW OUR NAMES

Thirty-nine years later, LeTourneau said, "I'll never forget that radio call for many reasons. Out of the blue, the voice broke radio silence, spoke English, he knew our team name, he knew my name and Black's name and he knew our codenames. That really blew me away."

When Black looked at his dumbfounded One-One in 1969, he grabbed the handset and said, "Who is this?"

The mystery man told Black that he knew where the team was located, and that he and his friends were going to find the RT Idaho men and kill or capture them. He said that he had six-digit coordinates on a map where RT Idaho was located.

Black's response was instant: "Let me help you mother..., here are my *eight*-digit coordinates. This is exactly where I am."

"I know who you are, Blackjack, and I'm going to get the Frenchman, too. I'm bringing my friends to get you."

Black told him: "I know your mother; she screwed hundreds of Soviet pigs to get your KGB assignment, except you're dumb like your mother and they sent you to the DMZ instead of the U.S."

At that precise moment, RT Idaho was near the top of a severely steep mountain. Even a dumb Soviet knew that mounting an attack against a SOG team with high ground would result in many casualties. No attack was launched. Obviously compromised, RT Idaho was extracted from the LZ by H-34 helicopters (code-named Kingbees) piloted by South Vietnamese pilots, under heavy enemy gunfire. Black was flown to Saigon, where he gave a full report. What, if any action was taken on it remains a mystery.

I Corps Commander Lt. Gen. William Stilwell inspects Lynne M. Black, Jr., during a pre-mission briefing at CCN in Da Nang, April 1969. (To the right of Black is Idaho interpreter Nguyen Con Hiep – with the sunglasses, who now owns a pet shop in Houston.) Photo credit: John Stryker Meyer

THE SOVIET "SECRET WAR" IN VIETNAM

The second confirmation of Soviets in Vietnam first surfaced on the Internet earlier this year, when reporter James Brown of *Russia Today* covered the first public reunion of the 3,000 Soviets who fought in the USSR's secret war in Vietnam. The segment that he recorded was released on the Internet.

Held in Zarya, outside of Moscow, the reunion marked the Soviet secret war they fought from 1965 to 1973, hence the celebration of their 35th anniversary of when their official involvement ended in Vietnam. They were the Soviet Union's "forgotten soldiers," veterans of a war their government denied involvement in for nearly 20 years.

Only now, long after the old communist regime collapsed in 1991, have officials – both Soviet and North Vietnamese – admitted that more than 3,000 Soviet troops fought against the Americans in Vietnam.

One of those Soviet veterans, identified by *Russia Today* as Nikolay Kolesnik, said, "We were known as a group of military experts. The commander was the senior expert. Thus, technically there were no Soviets in Vietnam. The only thing we knew we were Soviet people ... Soviet soldiers ...we had to do whatever it took to stop the (U.S.) air raids..."

Ironically, SOG's Soviet counterparts had their own plausible deniability, a political subtlety not lost on SOG members who ran all missions in Indian territory without any identification for their deniability if captured or killed.

Lee Cong Niem, a Vietnamese veteran of the Vietnam War, told *Russia Today* that the communists in North Vietnam "...have a lot of respect for Soviet equipment and Soviet experts."

CONFIRMATION OF COMMIE CONNECTION

The third confirmation of Soviets in Vietnam that provided further details of Ivan's penetration of SOG operational radio transmissions was provided exclusively to *Soldier of Fortune* by a member of the U.S. intelligence community, who asked to neither report his name nor the specific agency that employed him for more than 15 years. His employ-

Continued on page 34

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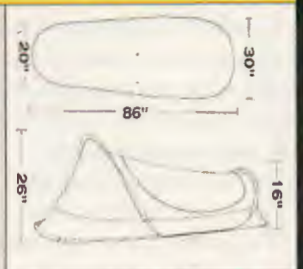

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 Continued from page 32

ment with that agency was independently confirmed.

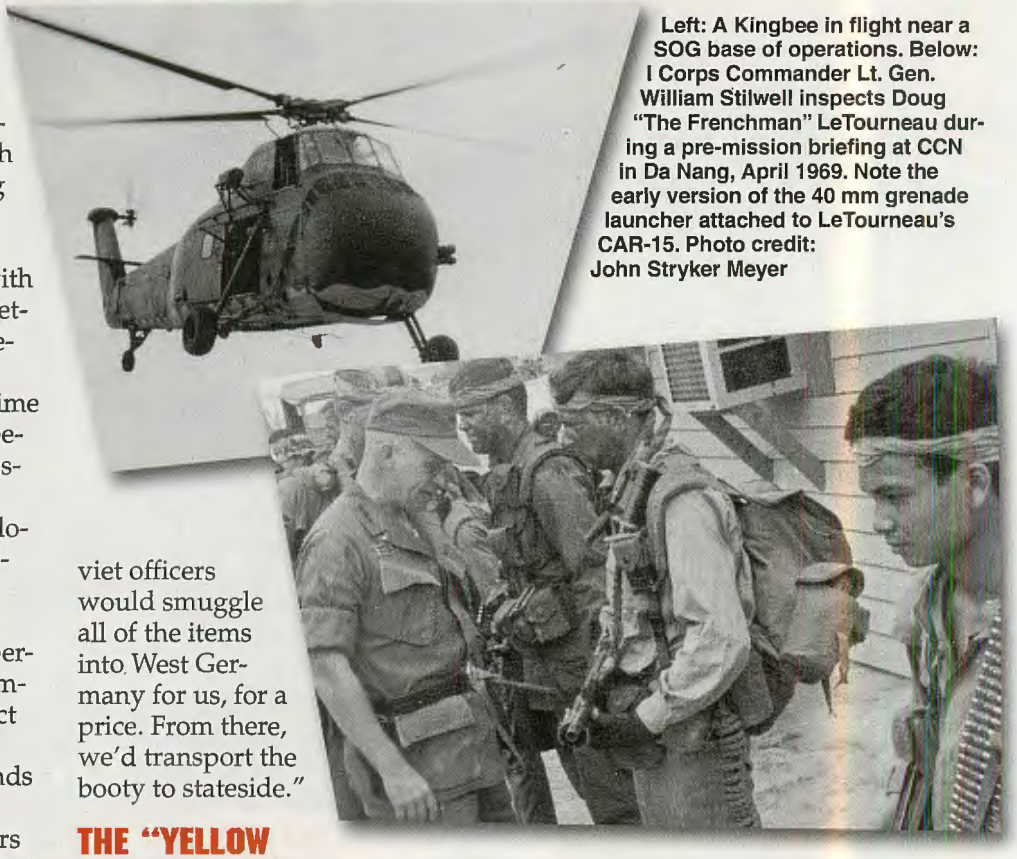
This operative said that in the early years of his intelligence employment, he worked closely with East Germans and Czechs during the last years of the Cold War in Europe – before the wall came down. Those men had worked with the Soviets who had served in Vietnam during the Soviet Union's secret war in Southeast Asia. The officer spent lengthy periods of time during the middle and late '80s behind enemy lines running clandestine operations covertly in East Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, where he eventually developed a rapport with several communists.

A key element of this covert operation involved working with members of the East Bloc/Warsaw Pact military forces, bartering almost anything they could get their hands on and swapping it for materials they could sell. During those years the officer used his mechanical engineering skills and experience to earn credibility and acceptance while working closely with the communists.

"The black market didn't operate with currency at that time, as it was useless in Eastern Bloc countries," the operative said. Instead of currency, he traded American blue jeans, racing goggles, gloves, T-shirts and brightly colored logo stickers for foreign material (FORMAT), such as radios, chemical protection gear, Geiger counters, radar bits, pilot helmets, Soviet night vision devices, and many critically sensitive items that remained classified.

A top priority for that operative was obtaining "anything that was aircraft-related, such as data recorders, black boxes, flight charts, training and evaluation manuals and anything on techniques."

In the late '80s, infiltrating into Eastern Bloc countries wasn't difficult, because the border guards were there to keep people in, the operative said. "We'd infiltrate with materials to trade for FORMAT hardware and items, take them back to our safe house near the border, and Soviet officers would smuggle all of the items into West Germany for us, for a price. From there, we'd transport the booty to stateside."



Left: A Kingbee in flight near a SOG base of operations. Below: I Corps Commander Lt. Gen. William Stilwell inspects Doug "The Frenchman" LeTourneau during a pre-mission briefing at CCN in Da Nang, April 1969. Note the early version of the 40 mm grenade launcher attached to LeTourneau's CAR-15. Photo credit: John Stryker Meyer

THE "YELLOW MONKEYS"

Over time, the U.S. intelligence operative ingratiated himself with the communists and eventually began hearing about the Soviet limited-proxy secret war in Vietnam helping the Vietnamese, whom they called "Yellow Monkeys."

"At that point in time, I didn't really know that much about *SOG*," the operative said. "Because I was an American, they wanted to impress me, so I let them fill in the blanks. In general, they wanted us Americans to know they didn't like being there. They said a large percentage of the Soviet troops were artillerymen, mostly Ukrainians, who specialized in anti-aircraft defenses and operating radar around Hanoi. "But, there were some who traveled farther south and worked with North Vietnam's communications specialists. They told me they had monitored SOG radio transmissions from Leghorn and Hickory." [Leghorn was the first radio intercept/relay point opened on a mountaintop in southern Laos in early 1967. First called Eagle's Nest, it was operated by SOG men from FOB 2 in Kontum until the end of the secret war in 1972. Hickory was a radio relay site, where recon teams from FOB 1, 3 and 4 could reach from the Prairie Fire AO on FM frequencies. The NVA overran it in June 1971. Staff Sgt. Jon Cavaiani was awarded a Medal of Honor for defending that site.]

The operative said, "The Soviets had tremendous respect for SOG operators, but they couldn't understand why the U.S. didn't use more sophisticated commo equipment or at least encryption communications equipment in Vietnam."

As the operative accumulated time behind enemy lines, he met more high-ranking communist officials, including a special operations instructor of the highest level who had experience with Soviet operators that had worked in Vietnam, Angola, Cuba, Egypt and other countries. This high-level source told the operative about one Soviet officer trained in special operations who functioned as a foreign military advisor.

That Soviet special operator would listen on SOG radio frequencies and hear Spike teams call in air strikes using clear voice with basic code words, the U.S. operative said.

This Soviet operator had the capability to speak to SOG teams. Trained in Cuba before being assigned to Laos as a communications expert, he spoke Spanish and English. (He later commanded Cuban troops in Angola, where he was killed around 1979.)

Marine Corps gunship pilot George "Boo" Miller, photographed at his captain promotion ceremony. Miller, a pilot with the famed Marine gunships with the radio call sign of Scarface, observed a Russian in the DMZ in December 1968 and talked to one on his UHF radio frequency that year. Photo credit: George "Boo" Miller

"The bottom line," the U.S. intelligence operative told *SOF*, "The Soviets and the NVA knew a lot about SOG recon teams. They also knew, and I couldn't tell how often, where the teams' LZs were. They knew many of the SOG recon teams by code name, especially in Laos, where the teams from Kontum and Da Nang, Phu Bai and Khe Sanh ran missions across the fence."

THE SAIGON SPY

The U.S. intelligence officer also learned one more nugget of information: "I was told that there were enemy agents in the highest command levels of SOG in Saigon. Their cover was so deep, it was never exposed during the Vietnam War."

That fact confirms many One-Zeros' suspicions that there was a mole, or a spy in SOG headquarters.

Additionally, during a 1996 Hanoi television show, Maj. Gen. George "Speedy" Gaspard was stunned when he saw an individual he knew as "Francois" receive Hanoi's highest military honor for his years of service as a spy in SOG. Gaspard, who had several tours of duty in Vietnam and in SOG, knew "Francois" and was "shocked" when he saw the program. Francois had access to highly sensitive information while employed by the U.S.

Author and SOG recon man John L. Plaster has a photo of Gaspard standing with "Francois" in Saigon, when Gaspard had no idea of the spy's real role for the NVA. That photograph of Gaspard and "Francois" is on page 463 of Plaster's book: *SOG: A Photo History of the Secret Wars*, by Paladin Press Books.

"There's no question that he hurt SOG operations," Gaspard said. "Again, how do you gauge it all? When you look at the success rate of short-term road watch and target acquisition (STRATA) teams by comparison, you can see why they succeeded. We were disconnected from Saigon and we didn't have the NVA and Soviets working against us."

Gaspard took over STRATA operations in October 1967, directing its missions into North Vietnam through September 1968. The unique aspect of STRATA, which operated under OP34B, was that the teams launched out of Thailand, flying in Air Force helicopters. The Air Force performed all insertions and extractions without pre-mission reports to Saigon. During Gaspard's tenure at STRATA, 24 teams were inserted into North Vietnam on various intelligence-gathering missions. Only one and a half teams were lost during that period of time, which involved inserting and successfully extracting more than 150 STRATA team members.

"Again, a key part to our success was having our separate chain of command and not telling Saigon. We worked with the Air Force on a need-to-know basis."

SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown, a former Green Beret who served in Vietnam, said, "The men of SOG were amazing. What we've learned about how an untold number of missions were compromised, yet they somehow managed to carry on, makes the SOG legend all the more remarkable."

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Air Force's First Combat Use Of Laser Joint Direct Attack Munition in Iraq

If the laser guidance doesn't get you, the GPS will!

By Central Command Air Forces News Team Public Affairs Office

TAKING OUT A MOVING VEHICLE

The U.S. Air Force, for the first time, has deployed in combat the guided bomb unit (GBU)-54, Laser Joint Direct Attack Munition – or LJDAM. The GBU-54 is the U.S. Air Force's newest 500-pound precision weapon, equipped with a special targeting system that uses a combination of GPS and laser guidance to accurately engage and destroy moving targets. On 12 August, 2008, F-16s from the 77th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, deployed to Joint Base Balad, successfully executed this "combat first" when the weapon was employed against a moving enemy vehicle in Diyala province.

17 MONTHS FROM JUST AN IDEA TO THE FRONT

"This employment first represents a great step in our Air Force's ability to deliver precise effects across the spectrum of combat," said Lt. Gen. Gary North, U.S. Air Forces Central commander and US Central Command's air component commander. "The first combat employment of this weapon is the validation of the exacting hard work of an entire team of professionals who developed, tested and fielded this weapon on an extremely short timeline, based on an urgent needs request we established in the combat zone."

Having identified the GBU-54 as an urgent operational need in early 2007, the Air Force completed its de-

Above: Staff Sgts. Michael Jackson and Anthony Bagen align a 500-pound GBU-54 Laser Joint Direct Attack Munition before connecting it to an F-16 Fighting Falcon, 14 August, 2008. Two F-16 pilots with the 77th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron executed the first-ever combat employment of a GBU-54, 12 August, 2008, against a moving enemy vehicle in Diyala province to support a combined Iraqi Army and U.S. Marine Corps operation. Sgt. Bagen, a weapons load crew chief with the 77th EFS, is originally from Tampa, Fla. Sgt. Jackson, a weapons load crew member with the 77th EFS, is originally from Union Springs, Ala. Both are deployed here from Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. Photo by Tech Sgt. Erik Gudmundson

Above: U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Derek Hibler removes the covers and pins from a GBU-12 on an F/A-18D Hornet aircraft before it launches from Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, on 23 April, 2007. Hibler is assigned as an ordnance technician with Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 121. (U.S. Marine Corps photo/Cpl. Sheila M. Brooks) Right: Aviation ordnancemen assigned to the "Knighthawks" of Strike Fighter Squadron 136 download a GBU-38 JDAM on the flight deck of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65). *Enterprise* and embarked Carrier Air Wing 1 are deployed in support of maritime security operations and the global war on terrorism. Photo by Seaman Brandon Morris

velopment and testing cycle in less than 17 months, fielding it aboard 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing aircraft in May 2008.

"We have consistently used precision-guided weapons to engage stationary threats with superb combat effects," said Brig. Gen. Brian Bishop, 332nd AEW commander. "This weapon allows our combat pilots to engage a broad range of moving targets with dramatically increased capabilities and it increases our ability to strike the enemy throughout a much, much broader engagement envelope."

TEAMWORK TAKES OUT THE BAD GUYS

In all aspects, from development to the actual weapon employment, teamwork was crucial. "Teamwork was the name of the game to accomplish this," Gen. North said. "From the experts in our Air Force Materiel Command who shaped our requirements, then developed, tested and fielded the weapon, to our aircraft maintainers, our munitions Airmen, and weapons loaders … and everyone in between … they made the operational employment of this weapon possible.

"At end game, on 12 August, the team of the joint terminal attack controller, alongside his ground unit commander in this event, ensured all criteria were met for the first combat delivery of the LJDAM. And finally, our F-16 pilot accurately and precisely delivered and guided the weapon to desired weapons effects—the disabling and destruction of an enemy vehicle and personnel," Gen. North said.

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THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

By Harold C. Hutchison

Global positioning system (GPS) data is so accurate that weapons using it for guidance normally hit within three feet of a target, meaning that even a small boom can ruin your day. So why would the Air Force be adding older technology in the form of a laser seeker to an already GPS-equipped bomb?

The answer is simple: The LJDAM is more accurate than the GPS-only guided munitions, which have a circular error probable (CEP) of 33 feet. Laser-guided bombs often have a CEP measured in inches. The other reason is redundancy—the ability to strike targets more precisely with more than one guidance system. Each of the guidance systems that make precision-guided weapons precisely that—precision guided, has its own set of strengths and weaknesses.

Laser-guided weapons are best used in clear weather, or when you need to strike a smaller target – like dropping a bomb down a bunker's ventilation shaft. The seeker locates the laser spot, and a computer steers fins on the tail of the bomb to chase the spot – much like a kitten chases the spot from a laser pointer. Only this chase ends with a boom. But there's a problem. Bad weather can make it difficult to properly target a laser. Or, you've bombed other targets, and there's now a lot of smoke in the target area. All of a sudden, the laser can't quite lock onto the target... and you end up missing. Not by much, but it could be enough.

The GPS guidance has no problem with target obscuration. Instead of looking for a laser spot from an aircraft or a ground team, the air crew enters the target's latitude and longitude coordinates in their on-board computer. The GPS system on the bomb knows the bomb's present global position, and then figures out how to get to the target's global position – like a navigation system in a cell phone or a car. The good news is that it works in all weather. However, GPS jammers are being used – and that forces a GPS-guided bomb to go to a backup inertial navigation system, which results in a 100-foot CEP. If the target moves, then the GPS-guided bomb will miss as well.

Until the GBU-54 entered service, American warplanes carried a mix of laser-guided or GPS-guided bombs. This was a bit of a problem, since some of these weapons would be dead weight. Bad weather (or the smoke from a target that has already been bombed) can defeat attempts to guide bombs with a laser. GPS jammers, or a moving target, render GPS-guided bombs useless.

By using both guidance systems, the GBU-54 brings the best of both worlds to bear against terrorists and other malefactors.

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SUPER SNIPER in Iraq

Marine Scout Snipers from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines shoot their way though enemy territory during the U.S. invasion of Iraq

From an interview with USMC Sgt. Joshua Hamblin, Scout Sniper, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, Baghdad, Iraq, 2003

U.S. Marine Corps scout snipers with Regimental Combat Team 6 look out over Fallujah, Iraq, 18 September, 2007, from a bunker on Observation Post Sina'a. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. David Castillo) (Released)

BY CRAIG ROBERTS

A LONG-AWAITED CALL

I was in my office conducting an interview when the call came in. When I answered, I could barely make out the caller due to static and breaking up of his sentences. Finally, after repeated questions that reminded me of having to try and call in fire missions in Vietnam on an antique PRC-10, I alerted to the fact that the caller was a Sergeant French, using a SAT phone, calling from Baghdad!

I had been working on my latest sniper book, *Crosshairs on the Kill Zone*, and had been jumping through journalistic hoops with the Marine Corps in an uphill battle to find and interview Marine scout snipers in Iraq. Due to the fact that the initial invasion had happened just weeks earlier, security was extremely tight and I had been told by public affairs officers from Camp LeJeune to Quantico to Headquarter Marine Corps that no one could talk to me or anyone else. But I kept climbing the PR ladder until I finally struck pay dirt. The Commandant's office authorized the interview and the call finally came.

A view through the scope of an M40A3 sniper rifle. Marine Sgt. Joshua Hamblin saw numerous Fedayeen gunmen this way before he whacked them. Photo by Lance Cpl. Tyler Hlavac, USMC.

Sgt. French advised that they would call the next day on the Sergeant Major's personal SAT phone, and I would be speaking with one of his top scout snipers in 3/7, Sergeant Joshua Hamblin. That interview revealed the following incredible, danger-packed, harrowing two-week sniper adventure.

CARNAGE CREATED FROM ATOP A ROOF

"Our job was to provide reconnaissance and surveillance, and when necessary precision fire in support of the operations. We knew our job, but we never realized just how effective we could be, and how much carnage a pair of snipers could create until the day we crawled onto a rooftop at the Al Rashid Military Complex near Baghdad.

We, the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, had entered Iraq from Kuwait, traveling north in HMMWVs as fast as the terrain allowed. In my vehicle I carried an M16 for suppressive fire, and my M40A3 sniper rifle for precision fire. I kept my sniper rifle right next to me in case it was needed. Whenever we came up to a road block, I was able to engage the Iraqis manning the roadblock with, as they say, "precision fire." That means lining them up and knocking them down.

WE NEVER MISSED OUR TARGET

As we moved through Iraq, we were attached, or "punched out" to various companies in the battalion for stalking out and doing observation and reconnaissance missions along the way. Sometimes the companies would have to stop for a few days and, while doing so, the scout snipers' mission was to move out ahead and watch the population for suspicious activity. In one area we saw no Iraqi soldiers, but plenty of young males of military age with short haircuts. It was obvious that these guys had discarded their uniforms and were trying to blend into the population, but there wasn't much we could do about it right then. The "rules" called for us to ignore those who weren't armed or did not attack us. But if we saw an Iraqi who was armed, we

 Continued from page 43

were to take him down. So, any Iraqi with an AK was a target, and we never missed.

Eventually, after fighting our way north through villages, towns, roadblocks and ambushes, we began drawing missions to support special operations raids that were looking for Baath party members and former members of Saddam's regime. We did this by covering the raiding party with our sniper teams to protect them as they did building entries.

ENCUMBERED BY CUMBERSOME GEAR

All of this time we were fighting the elements, and it was miserable. Dressed head to foot in heavy chemical suits, we could barely breathe while carrying our gear, wearing Kevlar vests and helmets, plus weapons and ammo. We had to adapt as we went because no one had fought for an extended period like this, with all this gear, for this long.

But worst of all was the lack of rest and the filthy conditions. There was no water for bathing, so whenever we found water or a broken pipe, we took time to wash down. As for sleep, we usually were lucky to get two hours of sleep before we were punched out to work another mission. It was not unusual to go two days or more without sleep. In these cases we ran on pure physical discipline and will power.

We basically worked two types of operations—one in the bush and another on buildings. In the bush operations we set up hides, using camouflage and concealment, and observed the population for targets or threats. In the built-up areas, we hopped up on rooftops to provide covering fire or area denial missions, where we denied the area to the enemy by covering it with direct fire.

WE REACH THE AL QAEDA CAMP

We finally made our way into the facility of Salmon Pak, where we had expected to meet a lot of Iraqi resistance. This is the location of the al Qaeda terrorist training camp, with the fuselage of an airliner for training hijackers. But instead of fierce resistance, we found destroyed buildings and burned out hulks where the air cover had done its job. There were scores of empty vehicles, empty fighting holes, and more young men with short haircuts, but no fighting.

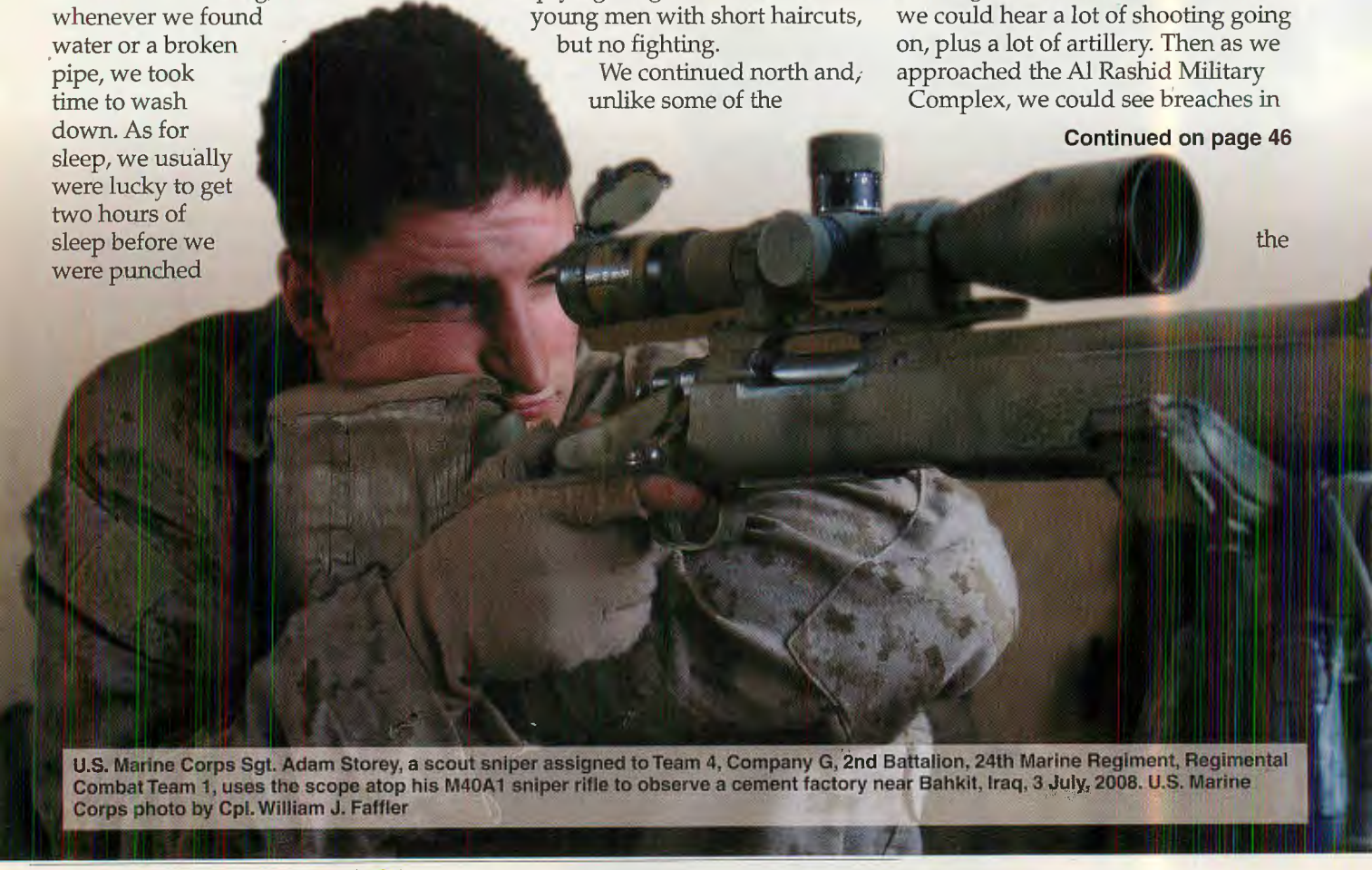
We continued north and, unlike some of the areas that were open desert, this was the Tigris River valley, which was lush with vegetation. This provided us with much more suitable camouflage and a much better environment to conduct operations in. But it was really now starting to get hot. We found ourselves taking more breaks just to air ourselves out. You would take off your chemical suit and just be drenched underneath. It was as miserable as having your own personal sauna bath that you wore—and couldn't get rid of.

A week after leaving Salmon Pak, while striking toward Baghdad and living on only two hours of sleep a day, the word came down that we could get out of our chemical suits! This was the most welcome news we had had in a long time. Finally we could work in our desert utilities and fight like normal Marines. It felt like the weather had cooled by several degrees, and was a major turning point in the war for us.

POSITIONING AT AL RASHID MILITARY COMPLEX

As we neared Baghdad we began running into more minefields, and we could hear a lot of shooting going on, plus a lot of artillery. Then as we approached the Al Rashid Military Complex, we could see breaches in the

Continued on page 46



U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Adam Storey, a scout sniper assigned to Team 4, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, uses the scope atop his M40A1 sniper rifle to observe a cement factory near Bahkit, Iraq, 3 July, 2008. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. William J. Faffler

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 Continued from page 44

the wire, and more mines scattered around, but still did not run into any significant resistance. It was as if no one was there, but might come back if we hung around for a while.

Taking over the complex, we set up positions to defend the place against a counterattack. Then, I and my partner, Sergeant Owen Mulder, were assigned an area of responsibility to set up a scout sniper position on a one-story house on the northeast side of the complex. This was what is known as an overwatch position, which allowed us to observe the approaches to that area from that direction. The farthest engagement range appeared to be about 750 meters.

Though there were two companies at the complex, one on each flank about 150 meters away, the area we covered was totally up to just me and my partner. Between us, Mulder held his M40A1 sniper rifle with the standard issue Unertl 10X scope, and I had an M40A3 sniper rifle with the ANPVS-10 day and night sight. The ANPVS-10 is a third-generation night image intensifier with daylight capabilities. We could work the position night and day, which is exactly what we would find ourselves doing.

We got up on the roof at night and I turned on my night scope. Mulder had night vision goggles, so we both could see the streets to our front in a clear ghostly green panorama. For American forces, our night vision capability was second to none, and gave us a giant advantage over troops not similarly equipped.

"I GOT TARGETS"

After two hours, we spotted a pickup truck approach, stopping about 400 meters short of coming into the military complex. As we watched we could see that the truck had a bunch of people in the back. Then, watching closely, we saw them begin jumping out of the truck, each carrying an AK. My pulse began to race.

U.S. Marine Corps 1st Lt. Bryan J. Abell (left), Scout Sniper Platoon leader for 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, and Cpl. Jason P. Abell, a machine gunner with 3rd Battalion, 25 Marines, recently met at Camp Hit , Iraq. At the time the photo was taken, Jason was on his way home after serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom while Jason was starting his second tour in Iraq. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Adam C. Schnell

"I got targets," I said to Mulder. "See 'em?"

"Yeah, let's go for it."

Immediately I decided to take a shot, and as I did I could see the driver jump out and go around the back of the vehicle. I lined him up in my sight and squeezed the trigger. He went down like a sack of potatoes. Mulder sighted in and fired too, and another Iraqi went down.

We just began lining up targets as fast as we could and taking the shots. As we did, other soldiers tried to drag the bodies off, but when they did we took them out too. It was like a shooting gallery. The more shots we took, the more targets seemed to appear. The adrenalin rush was indescribable. But training and discipline kept us pacing ourselves throughout the shots, taking over where runaway excitement wanted to rule. Spot a target, sight in, squeeze, watch the shot, work the bolt, pick another target. Over and over.

ALL WAS QUIET AGAIN IN THE KILL ZONE

Then the next thing I saw was the Iraqis dragging bodies into the pickup truck, then driving around the corner out of sight. All was quiet again in the kill zone.

I looked at my watch. About an hour before sunrise.

Nothing happened until after the sun came up. The Iraqis knew by then that trying to move at night would do them no good. In fact, to even up the odds a bit, they would have to move in daylight so they could see as well as we could. This would be another major mistake on their part. They simply did not understand the capability of a well-trained and equipped sniper team.

We observed the street for about an hour. Then I spotted two individuals enter our field of view, trying to cross the street. One was carrying an AK. Good enough.

"You got these guys?" I asked.

"Got 'em. You taking out the guy with the AK?"

"Affirmative."

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I estimated the range. 450 yards. I led him slightly and fired. He went down, but he wasn't killed immediately. His partner took off and didn't come back. The first guy stopped moving about thirty seconds later.

Our rules of engagement called for us not to shoot anyone who was not armed or did not pose a threat. But if they carried weapons they were bought and paid for. Also, if we had a suspicious vehicle, that came and went several times, we could engage it as well.

About ten minutes after that a truck pulled out of one of the side streets. Then fifteen minutes later the same truck came back with the same guy driving, followed by a second truck. Each was carrying seven or eight guys in the back.

"Watch these guys. They're probably armed."

A night vision shot of U.S. Marine scout snipers, one with an M40 bolt-action sniper rifle, assigned to Team 4, Co. G, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 1, observing a cement factory near Bahkit, Iraq, 3 July, 2008. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. William J. Faffler)

THEY JUMPED OUT, ARMED WITH AKs

Then, as we watched through the scopes, both trucks stopped and the riders all started jumping out. Each had an AK.

My partner and I didn't even have to say anything to each other. I took the closest truck and he took the far truck. We started shooting people. As fast as we could work the bolts and acquire targets, we squeezed the triggers and an Iraqi went down.

One was dropping right after another, just dropping like flies. We ended up shooting every one of them—all thirteen—right there, except one guy who managed to get into one of the trucks by shoving the dead driver out of the way and trying to back out of there. But we fired at the truck and I couldn't believe what happened next. For some reason we hit something critical because the gas tank exploded in a ball of flame, just like in the movies! I thought that cars and trucks blowing up when you shot at them was just Hollywood, but this one did exactly that.

The truck was still moving, so we both shot through the driver's side of the cab. Two 175-grain boat-tail hollow points blasted through the thin sheet metal of the cab and killed the driver as it coasted around the corner. He would cook in silence, just out of sight, for many minutes.

So now we have sixteen bodies littering the street, plus a burning wreck and an abandoned truck, all due to two snipers. It looked like a major battle had been fought there, but it was just Mulder and I, and we hadn't even fired a full box of ammo yet. The amazing scene of a vehicle blowing up would happen two more times over the course of that day.

Later in the morning, as I watched the street through my scope, I saw an Iraqi soldier turn the corner and begin walking toward us. He was in full uniform, wearing a helmet and vest and carrying a sidearm. It was as if he was just showing up for work that day and didn't know we were there. He began walking toward us along a row of light posts. As he passed each post I set the scope on him and began following and watching as he lessened the range.

About this time an old man came out from one of the houses alongside the road and began gesturing at him, trying to tell him to get out of there. But the soldier didn't seem to understand what he was trying to say and kept coming.

Mulder and I kept shifting our attention from the soldier to the old man, and back again. It was like watching a comical movie, like "hey, get out of here. They'll kill you!" and the soldier saying "Who? Who'll kill me? What are you talking about, old man?"

CIVILIANS WATCH A HORROR SHOW

Finally, as I watched the soldier shrug his shoulders one last time, I squeezed the trigger and could see the vapor trail of the bullet. It flew straight and impacted him in the center of the chest, like watching a movie in slow motion. I could see

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SUPER SNIPER IN IRAQ Continued from page 47

the dust fly off his shirt, then saw the expression on his face of pure shock. He was completely surprised. He looked down, then slumped over and fell to the ground. It was my best shot and I could see everything. The bullet path, the impact, the expression on his face. It was perfect.

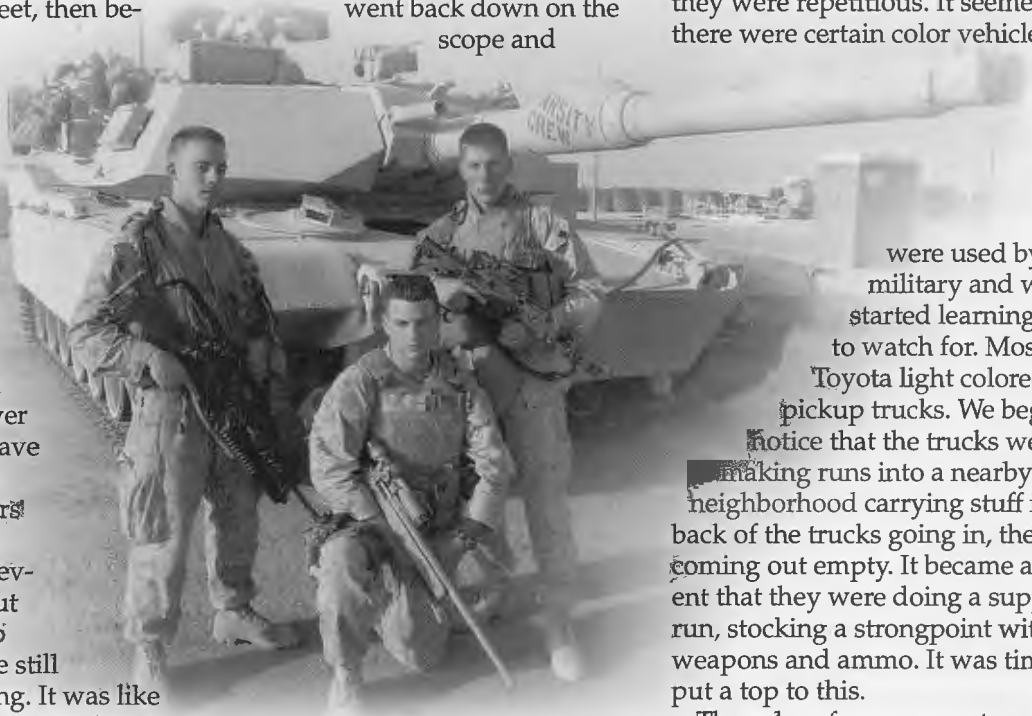
He tried to crawl out of the kill zone, but it was too late for him. He only moved for a few feet, then became very still.

The local civilians were very interested in what was happening, and watching all the action became an amusement to them. After each episode of firing and dropping soldiers, the civilians would come out, look around and laugh and smile, then look over toward the base and wave at us. It seemed almost like they were spectators at a sporting event.

By this time there's seventeen bodies laying out there, with two shot-up pickup trucks, with one still smoking and smoldering. It was like a scene out of a Rambo movie, but it was real. And here were all these people just lined up on the side of the street looking at the carnage like it was a day at the market.

"SUICIDE BY MARINE"

Just then a white pickup truck pulled out of a side street, and in the back was a typical terrorist with a black ski mask and black clothes, holding an AK. The truck turned and began speeding toward us. He was obviously a Fedayeen and was hell bent on "suicide by Marine." As the truck careened down the road, with this guy holding on for dear life, I raised my head to look at him at the same time he looked up at me. I went back down on the scope and worked to keep on target as the pickup truck bounced along the road. I found a lead angle, aimed high and took the shot. It was a dead slam hit and he went down in the back of the truck. We didn't get a chance at a second shot at the driver because he turned away and raced around a corner out of sight. But the guy in the black pajamas was down and finished.



A Marine sniper and two others stand in front of an Abrams tank.

Eighteen.

We continued to watch vehicles move in and out of the area, always trying to memorize them to see if they were repetitious. It seemed there were certain color vehicles that were used by the military and we started learning what to watch for. Most were Toyota light colored pickup trucks. We began to notice that the trucks were making runs into a nearby neighborhood carrying stuff in the back of the trucks going in, then coming out empty. It became apparent that they were doing a supply run, stocking a strongpoint with weapons and ammo. It was time to put a top to this.

The rules of engagement were that you could shoot a man with a weapon, or a vehicle carrying weapons by shooting the tires out or otherwise disabling the vehicle. One red Toyota car had made one too many trips and was now on the hit list.

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A BALL OF FLAME

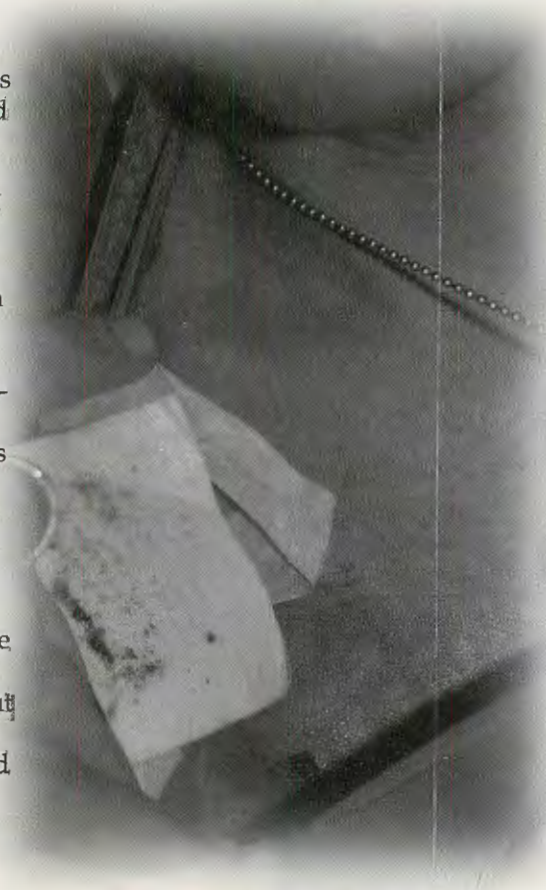
On the fourth time we saw the car, Mulder and I opened up. Mulder hit the driver and I hit the back of the trunk. Then the whole damn thing exploded! The whole trunk blew up in a ball of flame, then the car coasted around the corner. A few minutes later all hell broke loose as a trunkload of RPG rockets cooked off. We looked at each other as we listened to the distinctive "whoosh...bang....whoosh... bang" sound of the rockets igniting, taking off in odd directions, then exploding as they made contact with buildings, streets and anything hard.

It seemed like two 175-grain bullets had started a small war out there. By this time it dawned on us that we had not received any return fire during the engagements. We were in total control of the position, and there was nothing the Iraqis could do about it. If they tried to show themselves to engage us, we killed them. They had no chance to set up, locate us, then put fire on us in the time it took for us to see and shoot them. Plus we had cover and a much better long-range capability. We were trained Marine snipers and they were overzealous fanatics with little marksmanship training. There was no comparison. It was like the old joke of "don't attack that hill, it's a trick. There's *two* Marines up there."

Any time we saw an individual with a weapon to our front, he was history. But we did receive incoming fire from the flanks and couldn't do anything about it except hope we didn't get hit by "collateral damage." The line companies couldn't control all the individuals they were having contact with and several firefights were erupting on both flanks as Marine units ran into pockets of well-armed Iraqis. Rounds flew everywhere from those actions, and many flew right over us. Though we had total control of the area to our front, we had no control of what dangers lay to each side.

HURT A MARINE—DIE!!!

While we were there one of our snipers from the Scout Sniper Platoon, Sergeant Aaron Wintterle, who carried a Barrett .50 Special Applications Scoped Rifle, was manning a vehicle check point with one of the line companies when an Iraqi suicide vehicle approached. As Wintterle



Dogs tags are pulled aside to reveal a slight wound.

trained his .50 SASR on the vehicle, it exploded. A piece of shrapnel hit him in the face, breaking his jaw and putting him out of action. Immediately his partner, L/Cpl. Jacob Heal, who was a new guy under training, jumped on the weapon and spotted one of the Iraqis who was involved trying to run back down the road. The Marine took aim and lit him up, blowing out his chest.

Meanwhile back at the Al Rashid Military Complex, rounds came past us from the sides, along with RPG fire and explosions as close as fifty meters away. This became the routine throughout the day as sporadic fighting continued on the flanks.

But our job was to keep our front secure. Every time we found an armed man we took him out. When we saw armed trucks, we took them under fire as well. It was really weird to spot a pickup with a .50-caliber mounted in the back, then shoot the driver and gunner, then watch the truck just keep going like it's driven by a ghost.

When we saw weapons inside a car or truck, we engaged both the passenger and the driver. Our method was simply "whoever spotted the weapon first called the shot."

"I got RPG rounds. I'll take the driver. You take the passenger."

The other guy then would take out the passenger at the same time. This was the great thing about having two sniper rifles there, since we could fire on two targets at the same time.

Our body count continued to climb throughout the day.

ADRENALIN-PACKED SUPER SNIPERS

We were up six days before we got away from the roof and got four hours sleep. This was counting the three days movement through Salmon Pak, then the three days on the roof. Then it was back to the same position. Then we were up for another 72 hours constantly, moving or staying on the scope. Watching and shooting. We were running on pure adrenalin.

It got to the point where if an Iraqi entered our area, they took off their shirt, pulled off their white T-shirt and waved it like a truce flag until they got out of our area, then put their shirt back on. The word was out, and no one wanted to come into our kill zone to die for Saddam anymore.

Still, we continued to watch and wait. We took turns, an hour on the glass, an hour off the glass. Though it was fatiguing, we stayed alert. The adrenalin and the anticipation that anything could happen any second kept us on the keen edge of awareness. In fact, I was so pumped up on adrenalin that I could have stayed up for a week.

By the time we left this position, I had seventeen kills and Mulder had fifteen. *Thirty two total kills in one spot!*

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SUPER SNIPER IN IRAQ Continued from page 50

OLYMPIC STADIUM—FINAL DESTINATION

With the main part of the Iraqi resistance now crushed, we entered Baghdad proper and pushed in toward the city center. As we moved down the highways and streets, we could see vehicles on side streets that had been taken out the day before and were smoldering, and had rounds still cooking off. We ran into sporadic firing, both small arms and RPGs, but we aggressively moved through anything we came up against and pressed on. Our final destination was the Olympic Stadium.

The Republican Guards had told everyone that the Marines would kill everyone, and that we would eat them or some such nonsense. But when we moved through neighborhoods and people saw that we treated them well, and that we had finally run the Republican Guard off, they came out in the hundreds of thousands and began cheering us, dancing in the streets.

Still, even after we achieved positions at the Olympic Stadium and began to consolidate, we received sporadic incoming rounds. It was becoming obvious that it would take a long time to totally pacify Baghdad.

For two weeks we continued to do our surveillance and target acquisition missions, then pulled out to set up a more permanent base camp. By this time most of the Iraqi Army had thrown their weapons down, and basically said, "Okay, you win."

Mulder and I would not see a more target rich environment than what we had at the al Rashid gate.

Craig Roberts is a USMC Vietnam veteran who served in 9th Marines as an automatic rifleman and sniper. He is a long-time contributor to SOF, *and is co-author of* America's Combat Snipers, and Crosshairs on the Kill Zone: American Combat Snipers, Vietnam through Operation Iraqi Freedom, *published by Pocket Star. 384 pages. $7.99.*

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Maybe true, but the fact is that Georgia was a target of Putin for a long time. Certainly, they had to know that. Still, what they may or may not have thought doesn't change the fact that the situation did not warrant Russia's actions. – Ed.

A FIRE-SUPPORT IDEA

I like the idea proposed by George Burnett in the Dec. '08 issue: instead of an expensive-to-the-point-of-silliness new Navy destroyer with a "super-gun" for Marine landing support, a better support platform would be as follows:

A USN *Wasp*-class amphibious assault ship equipped with the following Marine artillery, positioned on the flight deck: High Mobility Artillery Rocket System and/or the self-propelled howitzer, such as the 155mm M109. As the *Zumwalt*-class destroyer's main projectile armament (not missile) is only 155mm, this ship is unnecessary for amphibious support and its abandonment should save our grandchildren a ton of money.

Of course, I know the Navy brass isn't going to give up their super-whammy-dyne new toy (defense/offense against the Chicoms?), but at least some better utilization of the equipment we have should be the "word of the day."

Ken Johnson

It's an idea, but the Wasp*-class ships currently are needed to carry Harriers, Ospreys, Cobras, and other aerial assets that the Marines need. The need for fire-support is not going to go away. – Ed.*

Zumwalt-class destroyer.

TUNA – WHAT CAN'T IT DO?

Here is something to try.

Last week while I was coaching my Jerusalem Spec-Ops Border Police snipers for the Israeli Police Annual National SWAT Competition, one of the guys (they are all

Continued on page 58

Howard Linett with his AR-10.

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INOVA SPECIAL PROJECTS DIVISION

COL. HOARE'S PLAN TO COMMIE-PROOF AFRICA

By Joseph C. Smith

MAD MIKE'S PLAN TO CREATE A BLACK MIDDLE CLASS

AFRICAN MERCENARY leader "Mad" Mike Hoare didn't just kill African commies by the thousands, but had a plan to bulletproof the rest from Marxist domination: create a black middle class!

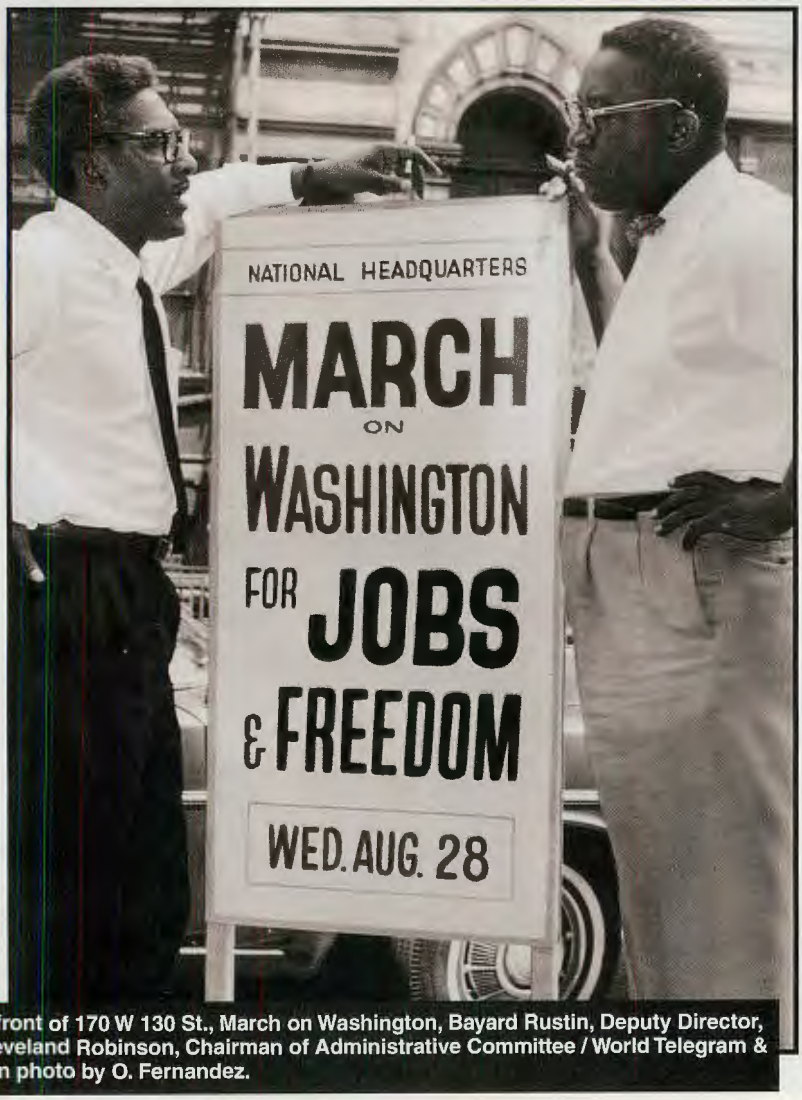
He dropped this grenade on a very conservative white audience in Durban South Africa, in 1975—a decade after he defeated a communist assault to seize the Congo. His role in that hyped event was that of a "draw card" to boost attendance. His "mission" was to swagger to the dais, reel off a few battlefield stories from his Congo years, and then politely walk off stage bathed in warm applause.

Instead he told his sea of white faces that blacks were the biggest victims of the Marxist tide that threatened all of Africa. "Fight communists with the weapons of capitalism" (from *The Seychelles Affair*), he challenged them.

"Improve the lot of the blacks. Create a solid black middle class that would have something to lose, some reason to fight against communism. I saw these tactics succeed in the Congo."

Then he pulled the pin on the "grenade" and lobbed it. He recommend that a full ten percent of the taxes his audience paid South Africa each year be channeled into raising the living standards of blacks and "vast sums" of those tax dollars be poured into black education.

The audience was stunned mute and Col. Hoare was not invited back. But the incident reflects Hoare's social conscience and belief that poverty is the fertilizer that nourishes the roots of communism.



In front of 170 W 130 St., March on Washington, Bayard Rustin, Deputy Director, Cleveland Robinson, Chairman of Administrative Committee / World Telegram & Sun photo by O. Fernandez.

LED AWAY TO THE SLAUGHTER

One life-changing day in Aba, a Congo town circa 1964, turned Col. Hoare into the anti-Marxist he remains to this day. While leading his 5 Commando "Wild Geese" mercenaries, he stumbled across a school, but wasn't greeted by laughing children, rather by silence, bottle flies, and that sweet sick smell of human corpses.

"Simbas," armed and indoctrinated by the Chinese and Russians, had swept through Alba, and a witness described the scene to Col. Hoare. "The political commissars made them line up here . . . and pointed to a long wall. The professors here and the boys there. They asked everybody who could read and write to step forward. Some of the boys did. The soldiers took these boys and their masters away and killed them."

At that moment of epiphany, Hoare knew the first move of the communists was to find a fertile field (full of the poor) to till and then destroy the "weeds," i.e., Western society.

Continued on page 56

"The Ultimate Fitness Program for Soldiers"

Simultaneously increases strength, endurance and flexibility. Can be done anytime, anywhere.

By Matt Furey
Best-selling author of *Combat Conditioning*

I was the total skeptic. Not only had I lifted weights and run long distance for years, but I had major success under my belt, including a world kung fu championship and a national collegiate wrestling title.

So I just didn't want to believe what Karl, a 76-year old man told me about exercising WITHOUT weights... and WITHOUT long-distance running.

Most importantly, I didn't want to hear that a good exercise program only took a few minutes. Hate to admit it, but I was addicted to the "hard work or nothing" mentality and refused to believe you could get into the best shape of your life by doing LESS... not more.

Let me tell you, when I looked at this so-called "old man's" physique and watched him demonstrate his exercises, I could not look the other way. I had to check them out for myself, even if it meant saying, "Okay, I've wasted a lot of time doing it the wrong way."

What I discovered shocked me from head to toe!

Before I met Karl I THOUGHT I was strong. I thought I was tough. But the exercises he gave me exploited every weakness that weights and running could not cover, In a matter of minutes, I knew Karl "had me."

So I gave up the weights and began a routine of bodyweight calisthenics called ***Combat Conditioning***. Afterall, when a man of 76 can do things that a 36-year old cannot do, that tells you that "Yes, there's gold in them there hills."

The exercises I learned had such a profound and dramatic effect on me, that for six years I have been introducing men and women of all ages and of all backgrounds to this extraordinary program – and the results are shocking, awe-inspiring and PROOF that this system works, and works FAST.

Who is Combat Conditioning for?

It's for the hard-working man or woman who often finds it difficult to squeeze in a quick workout.
It's for the traveling executive who sleeps in hotel rooms more than at home.
It's for those who have trained their whole lives on weights.
It's for athletes, martial artists and the military.
And .. **IT'S FOR** the man or woman who hasn't done a lick of exercise in decades.

Even One Minute a Day Brings Results!

Unlike other exercise program where you are told you **MUST** do 30 minutes of cardio pet day and an hour of weights, to get results, ***Combat Conditioning*** is totally different. 15 minutes is all it takes to whoop the hard-core trainee. But for the total beginner, he or she can get results starting with ONLY one minute a day. And no, this is not a joke.

Time is not the issue!

Forget all those workouts that take all day. With ***Combat Conditioning***, all that's required is your own body and a tiny "get started NOW" decision to DO a little something each day.

The key to your success is in the magical, transformative power of these exercises – not in your belief system about hard work. For many people, just one rep is all they can do at first, and they're shaking like a leaf on a windy day in Chicago. And so, that's all that person should do at first. Even if you think you're not doing enough – the exercises work their magic anyway. Your body has it's own intelligence and will work FOR YOU if you'll simply get out of the way and let it.

When you do, pretty soon you'll be the type of person who can do 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 128 repetitions and feel no fatigue. Instead of tiredness you'll feel exhilaration and ENERGY. You're building strength and endurance from the INSIDE-OUT. And believe me, once you can do more than a few reps, inches of unsightly fat and pounds of excess flab will fly off your body at break-neck speed.

New Results from Forgotten Exercises

Are the exercises in ***Combat Conditioning*** NEW? Well, not really. They go back about 5,000 years – but for the most part, they got lost in the shuffle when weights, gadgets and gyms came around. So although they aren't NEW, they're "New to YOU!"

Before I learned these exercises, I read about the Great Gama of India, a wrestler who followed this program and was unbeaten in 5,000 matches. I also read that the legendary Bruce Lee did these exercises, too. And we all know about Lee's incredible martial arts skills. Then there was the All-Pro NFL running back, Hershell Walker, who did bodyweight exercises each day. The list goes on and on. The key is in having a proven program with a track record, and ***Combat Conditioning*** is just that.

Puts You into the Old Clothes You Dream of Wearing Again!

The main reason why ***Combat Conditioning*** works is because it targets all the weak links in your body. And when all those weak links are given a little attention, your entire body gets stronger, faster, more powerful and more energetic. Spend time each day doing a few functional exercises and the payoff is HUGE.

You get functional strength, endurance and flexibility – all at the same time. Not to mention seeing the excess inches flying off your body, making it easy for you to fit into the clothes you dream of wearing again. Stop dreaming. Start DOING. And get results.

12 Ways Combat Conditioning Will Change Your Life!

Follow this program and your body is going to change big time. In fact, I've made a list of 12 of the most powerful benefits that hundreds of thousands of others all over the world have gotten from the ***Combat Conditioning*** program. Let's take a look:

1. **Cranks up your metabolism so you burn excess body fat a lot, lot faster. This means fitting into the clothes you WANT to wear.**
2. Packs attractive and healthy functional muscles (not grotesque) onto your entire body
3. **Simultaneously doubles your strength and flexibility – and does so without needing separate workouts for each.**
4. Quadtuples your endurance inside of 30 days. Never get tired again.
5. **Within a couple weeks, it often eliminates chronic back and shoulder pain from years of heavy squats, deadlifts and bench pressing – or other forms of abuse.**
6. Sleep like a log. Eight hours of deep sleep is no longer a goal. It's automatic. As soon as you hit the rack you're out like a light.
7. **Your self-confidence will have no bounds. Especially when you got compliments from people who hardly paid attention to you before.**
8. You can train anywhere. You don't need more than a few square feet of carpet or pavement and you're all set. You don't need equipment. Just your own bodyweight.
9. **You get a kick-butt workout done in 15 minutes or less.**
10. You'll turn back the clock. Friends may tell you that you look 5–10 years younger.
11. **You'll have an explosive type of strength that weights cannot give you. Your every movement will be lively and full of vigor.**
12. Your muscles will be pliable and powerful, like a tiger's.

Here's How to Order

Combat Conditioning: Functional Exercises for Fitness has 48 super effective bodyweight exercises along with seven different programs that will get you into kick-butt shape fast. Order NOW and you'll receive 3 free Special Reports on how to eliminate knee, back and shoulder pain. Your total investment in this no-nonsense book is only $29.95 plus $6 S&H U.S. (foreign orders add $12). Order online at www.mattfurey.com.

Or pick up the phone right now and call 1 813 994 8267 to order. You can also send a money order to Matt Furey Enterprises, Inc., 10339 Birdwatch Drive, Tampa, FL, 33647.

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Matt Furey
won a national collegiate wrestling title in 1985 and a world shuai-chiao kung fu championship in 1997. Furey has a knack for taking the average and ordinary person and transforming him with his powerful programs. Furey was inducted into the Edinboro University Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998 and spends much time each year traveling throughout the world, searching for the very best information available to his world-wide audience. His website, www.mattfurey.com, is one of the finest in the world, giving valuable information that changes lives.

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COL. HOARE'S PLAN TO COMMIE-PROOF AFRICA Continued from page 54

COMMIES ELIMINATE THE INTELLIGENTSIA

"The intelligentsia must be destroyed," said Hoare in *The Seychelles Affair*. "It is part of the basic doctrine of communism." The communists must destroy all vestiges of Western civilization, capitalism, and that quaint superstition called religion.

Only after the old is bulldozed away can the communists build a social matrix where all are beholden to, and controlled by, the state.

So, nearly a half century later, did Col. Hoare, and the rest of us (I fought Marxist Robert Mugabe's "boys in the bush" for 37 months in the Rhodesian Army)—in the long run—win or lose our anti-communist African campaigns?

Well, Professor J. Peter Pham of James Madison University, also Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies at the Washington, D. C., think tank Foundation for the Defense of Democracies has this sobering assessment:

THE SOVIETS LOST THE COLD WAR

"History records that the Soviet Union lost the Cold War. However, when one looks across Africa today and examines many of those holding positions of power, it is not altogether clear that communists didn't win the continent—thanks in large part to the failure of the United States and its allies to fully appreciate what was at stake."

Russian and China provide a kind of bullet-proof curtain for corrupt African despots and the quid pro quo is blatantly obvious: "You (referring to corrupt African despots) give us access to your strategic minerals and markets and we will always protect you at the United Nations."

Ever wonder why the United Nations doesn't act in Darfur? China is sucking oil from Sudanese soil! Each member of the permanent UN Security Council has VETO POWER. As members, both China and Russia would have the right to veto, let's just say, a plan to invade Zimbabwe.

THE BIGGEST SLAUGHTERHOUSE IN THE WORLD

Hoare's old Congo is today the biggest slaughterhouse in the world, an endless loop of murder, rape and internal war.

Undated Bureau of Prisons mugshot of Bayard Rustin

But during that magic time "window,"1977–1980, when the USA might have made a positive difference in Africa's future, President Jimmy Carter made a fatal—for Africa—wrong turn. President Carter and his Africa point man, Andrew Young, big champions of Marxist Robert Mugabe, decided to ignore Rhodesia's first majority election and bullied the United Kingdom to do likewise.

Black moderate and anti-communist Bishop Abel Muzorewa clearly won that election (54 percent of the vote) to become Zimbabwe's first black prime minister in 1979.

So why did President Carter hang with Mugabe, by far the most sinister of all possible choices? Because Mugabe was the candidate recommended by Mugabe's one-party "thugocracy" despots in neighboring African countries.

U.S. BETRAYAL A TRAVESTY

"The betrayal of Muzorewa is one of the more craven episodes in American foreign policy," wrote James Kirchick, assistant editor of *The New Republic*, in his sensational exposé "How Tyranny Came to Zimbawe: Jimmy Carter Still Has a Lot to Answer For," which ran June 18, 2007 in *The Weekly Standard*.

"History will not look kindly on those in the West who insisted on bringing the avowed Marxist Mugabe into the government," wrote Kirchick. "In particular, the Jimmy Carter foreign policy... bears some responsibility for the fate of a small African country (Zimbabwe) with scant connection to American national interests."

None other than Bayard Rustin, advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr., and chief organizer of the 1963 march on Washington ("I Have A Dream"), declared the first majority-rule election in Rhodesia to be "remarkably free and fair."

Civil rights icon Rustin, in Rhodesia as a Freedom House observer, added, "With the United States openly deferring to the wishes of ZANU, ZAPU, and their enablers among the African tyrannies, we have found ourselves, until now, tacitly aligned with groups armed by Moscow, hostile to America, antagonistic to democracy, and unpopular within Rhodesia itself."

DICTATORSHIP BY A SMALL BLACK ELITE

"If the presidents of Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Angola have their way," Rustin wrote, "majority rule will take a form more or less similar to what exists in their own countries; which is to say that it will be a dictatorship by a small black elite over a destitute black population."

In response to Carter's refusal to accept the legitimacy of the April 1979 election, the *Washington Post* editorialized that the administration was "ignoring fairness and impartiality in order to court those black African states, mostly petty dictatorships or paper democracies."

Rustin, were he still alive, would weep to see that his predictions came true. Muzorewa was an anti-communist who believed in representative government. Kirchick believes that had the USA and UK recognized that February 1979 election in Rhodesia, it would have sent a different signal to other African nations, and just maybe Africans could finally begin to be actually "liberated."

If you were to ask Col. Hoare if he is bitter about the outcome of Africa, I suspect he would say "yes," but that he found the challenges and rewards of command completely fulfilling. I doubt he would want to re-write any part of his history except perhaps *The Seychelles Affair*.

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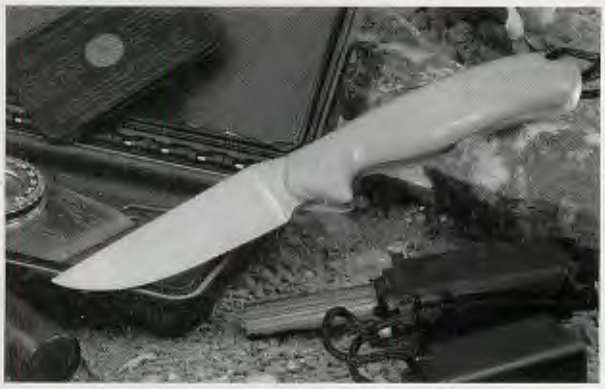
Russians) took out a can of police-issue tuna. Of course it is in oil. He tried some of the oil as a lubricant on an M16. It worked. Then he put a match to the can of tuna and used the flame to heat the water for our coffee. Finally, he ate the tuna as a hot entree. He said it was a Russian trick he picked up from friends in the Russian Army on a trip home in August.

Howard Linnett

Now that is versatility! – Ed.

WHAT IS THAT KNIFE?

I've enjoyed reading your articles for some time now. I recently read your Nov. 2008 article in *SOF* entitled, 'Survival in the Wilderness.' My question is about the knife with orange handles that is pictured on page 54. I've never seen anything like it before, but it's just what I'm looking for in a general bush knife. Could you please let me know if you sell them, or perhaps where I could find one if you do not carry them? I would appreciate your response.



This is the knife *SOF* Survival Editor Jeff Randall mentioned in his article.

Jeff Robinson

Are you talking about the knife in the attached photo? If so, it is one that we had built to our specs. – Jeff Randall, SOF Survival Editor

TWO DAYS...

It only took [Obama and Biden] two days to state they want to destroy the gun industry. I think it's time for our own million-person march. Also support letters from all the industry vendors stating how many manufacturing and support jobs will be lost.

The NRA, NSSF and everyone needs to step up. How about a commercial from the president of Remington stating the facts? There must be a Remington in half the households of America.

Dave

Ain't that the truth. Not only is the right to keep and bear arms vital to the Republic's health, but also those who produce the arms that are kept and borne. What is worse is that while they are being busybodies about what is in peoples' gun safes and how many rounds a magazine for a Glock or AR-15 can hold, the real criminals will be committing a lot of crimes. – Ed.

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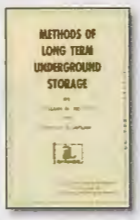

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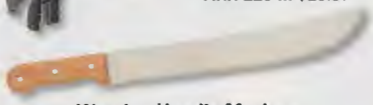

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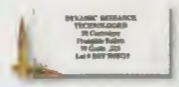

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TERRORISM SITREP

By Dr. Martin Brass

AMERICA AT WAR

1 **UKRAINE** CONTROVERSIAL NATO MEMBERSHIP TALKS, objected to by majority of the population, are aggravating its testy neighbor Russia.

2 **CAMEROON** HOSTAGES RELEASED! Ten oil workers had been taken hostage by militants in region slated for handover to Cameroon from Nigeria.

3 **ZIMBABWE** POWER STRUGGLE CONTINUES between dictator Robert Mugabe and MDC as negotiations remain deadlocked. STARVATION? World Food Bank runs short of cash for food aid.

4 **PAKISTAN** MARRIOTT BOMBING PROBE nets four suspects accused of murdering 60 victims. PESHAWAR OUT OF CONTROL as repeated suicide bombings leave dozens dead. END AIR STRIKES, President Zardawi urges General Petraeus! PREDATOR STRIKE kills 13 terrorists, including seven foreign fighters.

5 **SRI LANKA** OFFENSIVE AGAINST TAMIL TIGERS calls for the military to be heavily equipped in an effort to end 36-year civil war.

6 **SYRIA** DEADY US AIR RAID ON BORDER kills civilian family of five and three others in an attempt to target one suspect. Hapless, trigger-happy US administration wonders why more desperate terrorists are created. The IAEA puts Syria on its agenda.

7 **BURMA** CRACKDOWN CONTINUES as 14 pro-democracy activists are sent to jail for 65 years. BLOGGER GETS 20 years in prison.

8 **BANGLADESH** OIL EXPLORATION STANDOFF! Bangladeshi and Burmese ships face off as the latter country attempts oil exploration in disputed waters.

9 **INDIA** ASSAM BLASTS KILL 77 people, wound 300, triggering a massive manhunt. Several suspects connected with the Indian Mujahidden arrested.

10 **NORTH KOREA** HOW IS KIM? Rumors that dictator is crippled persist in spite of the regime circulating photo-shopped photos showing a healthy Kim. An unconvinced China sends the military to the northern border with China in the event that North Korean refugees flood China if Kim bites the dust.

11 **CHINA** TIBET TALKS FAIL! Dalai Lama orders the Tibetan people to decide the next step in the wake of diplomacy failure.

12 **LAOS** HMONG PROTEST repatriation of leaders to Laos by Thailand. Human Rights Watch calls on Laos to release information on their status.

13 **BOSNIA** KARADZIC TRIAL DELAYED as accused war criminal and former Bosnian Serb leader refused to respond to new indictment.

14 **VENEZUELA** SPY CONVICTED IN MIAMI for acting as an unregistered agent of Venezuela. He tried to conceal an effort to deliver $800,000 to Argentinean President Cristina Fernandez.

15 **COLOMBIA** ARMY HEAD RESIGNS, others canned as scandal over alleged civilian killings generates heat from UN and human rights groups.

16 **BOLIVIA** **MORALES BOOTS DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY!** Bolivia's Chavez wanna-be accuses anti-drug agency of promoting drug trafficking – so he can scarf up on profits from coca production.

17 **ANGOLA** **TROOPS DEPLOYED TO CONGO** as 250,000 refuges from Congo war flood the country.

18 **CONGO** **RAPE AND PILLAGE!** UN report claims Congolese troops looted villages, carried out rapes, during campaign against rebels. **PEACEKEEPERS TARGETED?** Rebels threaten to attack peacekeepers if they intervene on the side of the government.

19 **RWANDA** **DIPLOMATIC CRISIS WITH GERMANY** after Germany arrests Rwandan chief of protocol pursuant to a French international warrant related to missile attack on plane of former Rwandan President Habyarimana that killed nine. The assassination triggered the 1994 genocide that killed an estimated 300,000. German ambassador booted. Chief of protocol agreed on extradition to France, which declared legal standing for its participation in an UN-authorized operation to provide food and medicine to genocide victims.

20 **RUSSIA** **ISKANDERS TO KALININGRAD!** Putin announces deployment of short-range missiles to enclave. Target: American missile defense base. **DUMA RATIFIES TREATIES** with breakaway Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, giving Russia a pretext to keep 7600 troops on Georgian soil. **20 SAILORS KILLED,** 20 injured in worst nuclear submarine accident since 118 died on the *Kursk* in 2000. **PUTIN DICTATORSHIP** in the works as strongman schemes for two more 6-year terms as president.

21 **AUSTRALIA** **FIVE JIHAD EXTREMISTS** accused of plot to bomb or use firearms to defend their "religion."

22 **GEORGIA** **DARLING VICTIM OF THE WEST** brutally murdered hundreds of civilians and devastated homes in breakaway Ossetia province before war with Russia, Human Rights Watch reported. **TWO WRONGS DON'T MAKE A RIGHT**—Russia's brutal retaliation not justified, group said. **OPPOSITION RALLIES** demand early parliamentary and presidential elections. Is pro-American President Saakashvili in trouble?

23 **LEBANON** **US DISPATCHES LIGHT ARMS, SUPPLIES** to Lebanese Armed Forces in promised support of government. **TANKS AND AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS** may be on the way, much to Israel's chagrin.

24 **AFGHANISTAN** **BRITISH AID WORKER AND TWO GERMAN TROOPS** killed by Taliban as hostilities heat up. **THIRTY BEHEADED, SIX MUTILATED HEADS FOUND** after Taliban kills passengers on bus, accusing them of being soldiers in civilian attire.

25 **MEXICO** **SADIST DRUG KING PIN,** "The Doctor," head of the Tijuana Cartel, with a U.S. $5 million bounty on his head, killed in shootout. 4000 killed this year, 40 of them beheaded and heads thrown around or posted on fences. **ANTI-DRUG INTERIOR MINISTER KILLED** in mysterious plane crash.

26 **FRANCE** **PUTIN THREATENED TO HANG GEORGIAN** President Saakashvili by the balls, but I saved him, claims French President Sarkozy. Putin's precedent? The execution of Saddam Hussein.

27 **SOMALIA** **BRITISH COMMANDOS VINDICATED!!** Royal Marines with NATO take out armed pirates attempting to overwhelm a Danish ship, killing two and detaining the rest. The incident overshadowed the fiasco when Iran held 15 British sailors hostage for days.

Sheriff of Ramadi

How American SEALs helped win Anbar

By Dick Couch

In the second part of SOF's extract of Sheriff of Ramadi, the 1st Armored Division and Navy SEALs get ready to clean the insurgency out of Ramadi.

Above: The streets of Ramadi. Elements of the U.S. Army patrol in western Ramadi under the cover of an M1A2 Abrams tank. Later on, the Iraqi police would be on the streets with the Army and the Marines. Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Inset: Home of the Bulldogs. All is quiet now, but this combat outpost, COP Falcon, in western Ramadi saw some of the fiercest fighting during the battle. Courtesy of Lieutenant Steve Ruh

NEW WARFARE

In early June 2006, the SEALs in Ramadi were preparing to engage the enemy in a way they had not done in their 45-year history. They would still operate with the *jundis* that they and the previous task unit had trained, and the intelligence and targeting cells would continue to crank out information on specific insurgent targets. But the focus of SEAL operations would be to support the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division of the U.S. Army in the battle to retake Ramadi. When the Sheriff stepped into the streets with his Soldiers and Marines, the Navy SEALs would back his play.

The order of battle on the eve of this struggle pitted four American Army battalions, one Marine battalion, and two Iraqi Army brigades against an unknown and fluid number of entrenched insurgents. For the Americans there were the 1-35 and 1-37 Armor battalions at Camp Ramadi, the 1-6 Infantry battalion (mechanized) at Camp Blue Diamond, the 3/8 Marine infantry battalion at Hurricane Point, and 1-506 Infantry battalion at Camp Corregidor. The Iraqi 7th Brigade was at Camp Ramadi with the Iraqi 1st Brigade just across Route Michigan from Camp Corregidor. All told, there were some 5,500 Americans and 2,300 Iraqis going into the battle of Ramadi. Among them was a Navy SEAL task unit with thirty-plus combat-ready SEALs.

INCURSIONS INTO INSURGENT TERRITORY

The battle began on 17 June, with two combat outposts (COP) being sited simultaneously in the southwest and southeast sides of the city. A third COP was established on 18 June in the southeast sector near Camp Corregidor. The outposts were named COP Iron, COP Spear, and COP Eagles Nest, respectively. These initial COPs were designed to block insurgent infiltration activity from the south. It took several days of fighting and building to seize and harden each of these three outposts and turn back the inevitable insurgent counterattacks. Over the course of the next seven months, thirteen COPs and several Iraqi police stations were established, then defended on a daily basis. SEALs were involved from the beginning in nearly all of these operations. Each of these outpost operations was an incursion into insurgent-controlled territory. Each one was different, but each was always combative—a story

Main entrance to the team house. Memorial at the quarterdeck of the team house at Camp Marc Lee in honor of Marc Lee and Mike Monsoor. SEAL team emblems surround an aerial view of the camp. Courtesy of Lieutenant Steve Ruh

unto itself. I've chosen one of these operations as a surrogate for the SEALs' role in this battle as it related to these outposts. It was the establishment of COP Falcon in southwest Ramadi on 25 June. This important COP was located at the intersection of Baseline and Sunset roads, in the heart of "Indian country."

"There are a lot of moving parts to putting in a COP," Captain Mike Bajema told me. "It's a multilayered process that requires the organization of diverse forces and the staging of a lot of materials." Mike Bajema was the Bravo Company commander with the 1-37 Armor battalion of the American 1st Armored Division at Camp Ramadi, and a veteran of close to *three years* of continuous duty in Iraq. Bajema grew up in Seattle and graduated from Washington State. He's an armor officer, a tanker, and professional Soldier to the core.

"The site of a prospective COP is chosen by the higher-ups with some thought to its role in the overall battle plan, the logistics, terrain, and even the psychological impact it might have on the enemy and the people in the surrounding area. Lives are at risk, so each one is sited very carefully. Once a site is identified, the next step is for the company commander who will be in command of the COP to make a reconnaissance of the area and, if possible, to put eyes on the buildings that will form the COP—kind of a combat suitability study. In the case of COP Falcon, I was the company commander, and I led the reconnaissance of the area, three days before we went in. It was an armored reconnaissance, and when we got close to the area, we began to get hit with IEDs. In those days, when you drove around Ramadi in a tank or a Bradley [Fighting Vehicle], expect IEDs. I did get close enough to see that the buildings we wanted to use would be inadequate, and we would have to have more structures than we'd initially planned on for this COP. This was a residential area, and our original plan was to occupy four residences. We ended up with eleven at COP Falcon. The taking and occupation of residents' houses are done with a lot of care and approvals that go up to the brigade level and beyond. We're not exactly the ideal tenants you want in your home, but the Iraqis we had to relocate for COP Falcon were well and fairly compensated.

SURPRISE IS CRITICAL

"Once we've confirmed the location, a lot of planning and organization has to be done in short period of time. The quicker we can move, the better chance we have of achieving

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surprise. The taking of a COP is a battalion-plus operation with help from the engineers and the SEALs. The engineers take satellite imagery and any photo-reconnaissance imagery, and design the outpost perimeter. This means they have to determine what exterior walls exist that they can make use of, and what concrete walls are needed to create a completely walled, defensible compound. The Army engineers, the Navy Seabees, and the battalion support platoon, along with my headquarters element, have to figure out how much is needed in the way of concrete barriers, food, water, concertina wire, generators, plywood, two-by-fours, ammunition, sandbags, et cetera. In other words, what will it take to build the COP and what will it take initially to sustain the COP? The materials, type and quantities, have to be calculated, staged, and some estimate made of how many flatbed trucks and how many trips it will take to move the materials from Camp Ramadi to the new COP location. For COP Falcon alone, the initial push called for 10,000 sandbags. In addition to erecting the walls, we had to build out eight fixed rooftop fighting positions. We had to plan for new wiring, lighting, power distribution, and communications. There had to be a forklift at the COP to unload pallets and move concrete barriers into place. There also had to be a very brave combat forklift driver. The build-out was a 78-hour mission, with the first 48 hours the most critical. I had to plan for rest breaks for all the engineers, builders, and drivers. The actual mission began with getting the security package in place, and that started with the Navy SEALs."

Left: Job one—training Iraqi Army scouts. SEALs from Team Seven at Camp Ramadi follow Iraqi soldiers as they fire at silhouette targets while moving forward. Courtesy of Lieutenant Steve Ruh

Above: Clearing the second story. Two soldiers of 1-37 Armor race up to the second story of a building to check for insurgent presence—dangerous business for soldiers and for SEALs. Courtesy of Captain Mike Bajema

"We had gone in a few nights earlier to do our own recon of this COP site," Lars Beamon said of the COP Falcon operation. "It was one of several maritime operations we conducted in Ramadi." COP Falcon was the first joint combat operation conducted by Captain Bajema and Lieutenant Beamon. There would be more, as the SEALs would soon sortie often from COP Falcon into southwest Ramadi. Their relationship from the beginning was prototypical of the Army–SEAL bonding. Here's Mike Bajema on Lars Beamon: "We're brothers from different mothers." Lars Beamon said of Bajema, "I never met a more capable and dedicated warrior than Mike Bajema."

SEAL RECON

"We inserted by Marine SURC [Small Unit Riverine Craft] off the Habbaniyah Canal and patrolled in on foot," Beamon said of the SEAL recon. "The Marines have some great boats—quiet, well-armed, and with convenient bow-entry doors. The Marines who man them know their business and are very professional on the water. We were very comfortable having them insert and extract us on missions. Once ashore we conducted a careful reconnaissance. We made a point to move about an extended area so we wouldn't tip off the exact location of the new COP. Yet we were able to get some good

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IR pictures of the COP buildings. This was a pretty dangerous area, down on the edge of the Al Mualemeen District. When we got to the neighborhood where the COP was to be sited, we found two guys in the street planting an IED. We shot them both. Then we completed our recon and got back to the boats."

The day before the operation was to kick off, a long train of trucks, tanks, supplies, and staged materials was carefully assembled at Camp Ramadi. Then there were extensive briefings for all units involved. There were final operational orders to be given, communications plans distributed and radio checks performed, premission inspections held, and a massive amount of details that needed attention. Captain Mike Bajema was everywhere. Everyone involved were professionals and pretty much knew their jobs, but Bajema checked everything. This would be his COP and his company's home for the next six months or more.

Left: More door kicking. Forced armed entry was sometimes the only way to gain access to a building in Ramadi. Often two boots were needed. Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Above: Reliving the battle. The author stands with Lieutenant Ned Hurt on the roof of the Full Metal Jacket building, talking about the role of the Corregidor SEALs during the battle. Hurt had two combat tours in Ramadi. Courtesy of Lieutenant Steve Ruh

THEIR WORLD WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE

After dark on the evening of 24 June, an expanded SEAL element was again inserted by Marine SURCs. Those living in the houses that would compose the COP were still unaware that their world was about to change. The SEALs, their EOD techs, a Marine ANGLICO (Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company) air controller, interpreters, and their contingent of scouts quietly made their way to the objective. They were all traveling heavy, as they would be out several days and, in anticipation of heavy fighting, they carried a great deal of ammunition.

"We didn't have to wait long to make contact," Beamon said, "as we killed an armed insurgent on the way in. It let the Army know we were on the job; when they rolled up, there was a muj facedown in the street at the entrance to their new COP. We went into the main house, a tall three-story residence. The scouts and the terps explained to the residents what was coming, and they took it stoically. These are people used to war. We set up shooting positions in the upper stories, and called Mike to tell him we were in place. Our job now was to provide a sniper overwatch along the routes that the lead Army elements were going to use to get to the COP location.

Since this area was known to be liberally sprinkled with IEDs, the Dagger clearance teams came in first, ahead of the armor. These brave soldiers and their heavily armored ve-

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hicles are charged with route clearance—in this case from Camp Ramadi to COP Falcon. These are the IED-removal specialists. They have a variety of equipment from specially configured Bradley Fighting Vehicles to large trucks called Buffalos that look a lot like garbage trucks. These vehicles have wire roller brushes, mechanical arms, and other physical-removal apparatuses. They also emit a broad spectrum of radio frequency energy to disrupt radio-controlled or cell-phone-initiated IEDs. There is nothing subtle about a Dagger Team. They have racks of spotlights and they make lots of noise—audibly and electronically. They are manned by some of the bravest soldiers in the battlespace. The SEALs watched as they approached, specifically looking for insurgents with shoulder-fired antitank rocket launchers (RPGs) who could threaten the Dagger Team vehicles.

THE ARMOR

Next comes the armor—the regular M3 Bradleys and the M1A2 Abrams tanks. They follow the Dagger Teams in and fan out around the COP to provide a cordon of security around the site. Close behind them is a company of infantry soldiers for additional security. There needs to be an area sufficiently cleared around the Falcon site in order to protect the builders of the COP. This could be a radius of a city block or more. With armor and infantry in place, Captain Bajema, his Bravo Company Bulldogs (the nickname for the Soldiers of Bravo Company of the 1-37 Armor), and their supporting elements come in and occupy the buildings. For COP Falcon, Bajema has two mechanized infantry platoons, a mortar platoon used as a light infantry platoon, a tank platoon, an engineering platoon, and a headquarters platoon. As Mike Bajema and his people move in, Lars Beamon and his snipers move out. Sometimes the SEALs will leave an overwatch element at the COP, but not this time. They patrol out from the new COP, past the infantry and armor, to set up sniper overwatch positions along the routes they've determined the insurgents are most likely to use to mount a counterattack.

They also fought. One of the many interpreters who worked with the SEALs during the battle, this "terp," seen here at Camp Corregidor, was an American citizen whose parents were born in Iraq; he spoke flawless English and Arabic. Photo by Dick Couch

FINE LINE BETWEEN SECURITY AND GOOD SHOOTING POSITIONS

"We liked to get out and into our shooting positions well before daylight," one of the platoon snipers told me. "Usually we've identified the buildings where we wanted to set up, but sometimes we'd make a last-minute decision to change from one to another. It becomes an issue with the security of the position and the fields of fire. It seems as if it's always a compromise between good shooting positions and good security—offense and defense. It's never a perfect world, and in Ramadi we nearly always had to trade off one for the other. No two overwatches are the same. We like a building that has high shooting positions and fields of fire along two avenues—more if we can find the right location. This is not rocket science, and the bad guys know what makes a good shooting perch as well as we do. As much as we want the good shooting positions, we're always looking for a building that doesn't have too many blind spots—avenues of approach where the enemy can sneak up and get close."

MECHANICS OF A SNIPER OVERWATCH

I spoke with a number of SEALs about these operations and their accounts varied along a familiar

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On patrol, after the battle. Lieutenant Steve Ruh looks across at the author in the rear seat of a HMMWV at Camp Marc Lee, August 2007. Photo by Dick Couch

theme. This might be a good time to outline the mechanics of a sniper overwatch as they evolved in the battle of Ramadi. On occasion, a suitable abandoned structure was found, but for the most part, they were occupied residences, and the occupants had to be dealt with. This was done in various ways, by a polite knock on the door up to a full-on explosive breaching and building takedown, but usually the former. The residents were told what was happening and given assurance that they'd be paid for their inconvenience. Once the SEAL element went inside, no one was allowed to leave until the mission was finished. Sometimes these residents were cordial and amenable, and made tea for their surprise guests; other times they were withdrawn and hostile. But the work had to go on. In most cases, the scouts held the residents on the lower floor and tended to security while the SEAL shooters took to the upper floors or rooftops. Depending on the building and its configuration, it takes a while to get set up. And it also depends on how many guns were sent in for the overwatch. When there were no suitable shooting stations from windows or rooftops, the latter proving dangerous as the battle wore on, a hole had to be made in the walls for the sniper-rifle barrels. This was sometimes done with a loophole charge—a quarter-pound block of C-4 explosive to punch a shooting hole in the adobe-style walls. Most Iraqi homes and buildings were of a cinder-block, stucco-covered type of construction. This made for solid defensive shooting positions, but was often hard to punch holes in for sniper work. Here, again, the residents were compensated for this damage. That said, it's hard to picture some American GIs in a French farmhouse paying for any damage they might have caused while they fought the Germans, but that's how it was done in Ramadi. The Iraqi scouts held security in the lower floors and watched the residents while the SEAL snipers looked over their precision weapons and waited for insurgents. Once secured and sited, the residence became an overwatch position, sometimes called an OP.

"Once the SEALs got in place on the outer perimeter," Mike Bajema said of the Falcon operation, "we were as prepared as we could be to defend the battlespace around the COP. Now the Army engineers, the Navy Seabees, and the support elements rolled into Falcon and started a 48-hour nonstop build-out of the site. Trucks began to ferry equipment and building materials in from Camp Ramadi, often taking sniper fire as they came and went. They dropped more than 200 twelve-foot concrete-wall T-barriers, set up 2000 meters of concertina, and strung God knows how many feet of electrical wire. It was a minor construction miracle."

NO GLORY FOR ENGINEERS

"Those of us on the operational end of things often don't often understand, or get the chance to appreciate, the work of the engineers," Lieutenant Commander Jack Williams said of the COP construction crews, "but they were totally awesome." Williams came into COP Falcon with armor elements to see his SEALs in their initial overwatch position at the COP site. He remained there after they moved out into the outlying overwatch positions to ensure that amid all the commotion, their locations and area

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clearances were known to other friendly units. "It takes some courage to do what we do, but in my opinion it takes a whole different kind of courage to keep your mind on your job—unloading trucks, setting up barriers, installing generators—while insurgents are out there trying to kill you. They worked like dogs, eighteen hours a day or more—exposed, wearing helmets and body armor in 115° heat. Those Army engineers and Seabees were true heroes. When they were building those combat outposts, all of us worked to keep them safe. We SEALs stood in their shadow; they were nothing short of magnificent."

A FEVERED PITCH

Inside the perimeter of the new COP, engineers and soldiers alike worked at a fever pitch, laying concertina wire, moving supplies, and carrying sandbags amid the drone of generators. Outside the outpost grounds, between the new concrete-barrier walls and the tanks and Bradleys on the outer security perimeter, Soldiers patrolled the streets, carefully searching the upper stories of buildings for insurgent activity. Skirmishes happened often. Overhead, F/A-18 fighters and drone aircraft circled the new COP while keeping human and electronic eyes on the surrounding area. At night, there were AC-130 gunships overhead as well. And well outside the foot patrols and the armor, Lars Beamon and his snipers kept watch on the streets of Ramadi, specifically along the routes the insurgents might take to get to those building COP Falcon. This was a relatively new game for the SEALs and the insurgents, and a learning experience for both.

SEALs train for this and know how to conduct sniper overwatches, but usually in the context of covering a single special mission, such as a raid or an assault, or to protect a conventional force patrolling in the street. They also train for these overwatch operations with the idea that they would be shooting from positions unknown to or hidden from the enemy. And for the most part, their training is for short-duration missions. Now they were going out and sitting in shooting positions from two to four days at a time. Sometimes the objective of the overwatch was area denial, as with COP Falcon, and sometimes it was to provide top cover for Soldiers and Marines patrolling in the streets in support of an extended combat operation, like a cordon-and-search operation. The insurgents quickly became adept at locating these overwatch positions. And if the SEALs managed to set up in an overwatch undetected, that advantage went away with the first shot taken. With this first shot, the overwatch often became nothing more than an elevated, covered position from which to engage the insurgents in a sustained gun battle.

INSURGENTS' FAMILIARITY RESULTS IN CARELESSNESS

The insurgents knew the city and the neighborhoods far better than the Americans. If they didn't intuitively know the location of the best and most likely positions the overwatch

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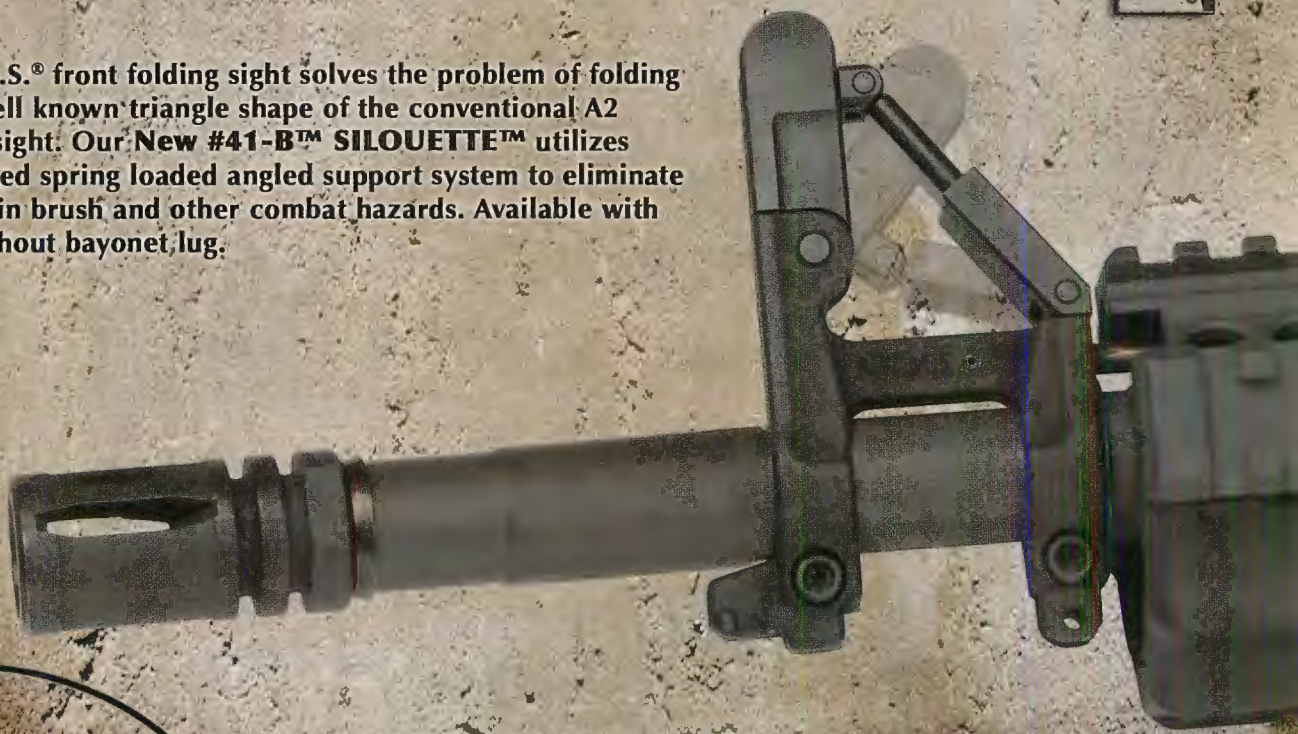

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might use, they quickly learned. They also learned how to move in the dead spaces where they were screened from their enemy's fields of fire, both from the COPs and from the sniper OPs. For the insurgents moving on the street, these were life-and-death lessons in trigonometry; those who didn't master this skill, or were careless or less nimble, were quickly killed. They learned from bitter experience just how accomplished these Sailors with sniper rifles could be. The SEALs took a grim harvest of insurgents in Ramadi, especially early on during the building of the initial COPs. In many cases, each of these insurgent deaths was a mistake on their part—and a lesson learned. They soon began to understand the methods and tactics of these skilled urban shooters and to develop countermeasures.

"Shooting these guys was very easy at the beginning," a SEAL sniper told me. "They were careless. One day there were these two muj heading for a new COP on a motor scooter. One had an AK-47 and the other an RPG. One of our snipers got them both with a single round—one shot, two kills. But it gradually got harder. It was a Darwinian thing. We shot most of the stupid ones, and that left the smarter ones to evolve and survive. But we evolved as well. And even for some of the hard-core fighters out there, all they had to do was make one wrong move at the wrong time or take one too many chances. When they crossed an open area, we might not get the first one, but we'd get the second—and the third if they were dumb enough to try it. We're SEALs, and we were very good when we got to Ramadi. For the insurgents in Ramadi or who came to Ramadi, they became good or died in the process."

ANOTHER WARRIOR IN THE BATTLESPACE

SEAL contributions to the battle extended well past precision shooting. In their role in Ramadi as "another warrior in the battlespace," they came to be looked on by the conventional forces as a brother warrior rather than a special warrior. Yet few warriors arrive in the battlespace better prepared or with more extensive training. Most first-tour SEALs will have trained for *two-and-a-half years* before they go in harm's way. Given that they have a maritime skill set that can command a third of that time, it's still far more comprehensive than the basic and advanced infantry training afforded new Soldiers and Marines. These Sailors train and drill in ground assault and fire-and-movement—repetitively, and in different kinds of terrain. They practice these disciplines at all levels of training with live fire. Jack Williams likes to tell the story of one of his new assistant platoon OICs on his first combat tour. He was in one of the COPs when a call for help came in. One of the Army military transition teams (MiTT) and some of their Iraqis were pinned down by snipers and unable to move. This young officer quickly collected a squad of SEALs and *jundis* in two HMMWVs and hurried to their location. When he got to the MiTT and the Army major in charge, they were still taking fire from the insurgent snipers. He immediately sent a SEAL-scout element to flank them. With suppressing fire from the flank, he split his remaining element into two groups and began to leapfrog toward the enemy position. They were able to kill one of the insurgents and drive the others off.

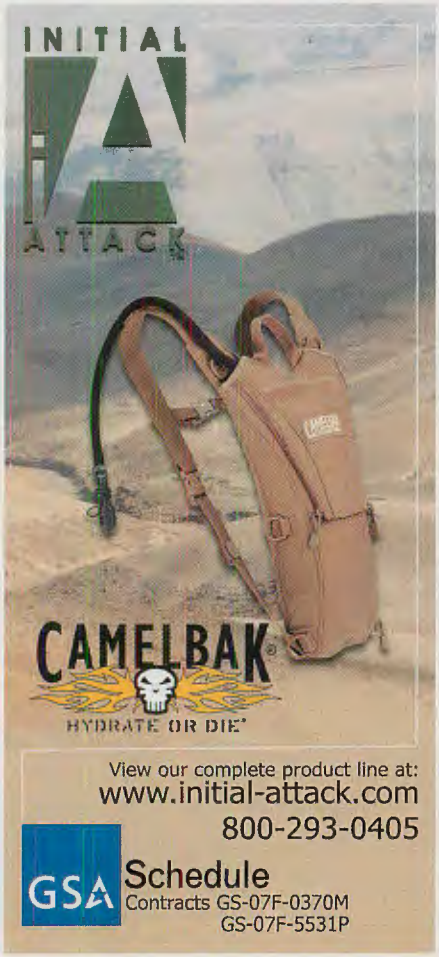
"You guys were terrific," the major said in thanking his rescuers. "You must have a lot of experience in urban combat."

"Not really," the SEAL, a junior-grade lieutenant, replied. "This was my first firefight."

NEXT: Analysis of the first time that SEALs operate in direct and continuous support of conventional forces in combat

Sheriff of Ramadi, *by Dick Couch, is available from Naval Institute Press. 288 pages, $29.95.*

SUPPORT THE TROOPS!!



A C-17 Globemaster III aircraft deployed from McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., taxis after landing on Joint Base Balad, Iraq, 31 October, 2008, following a recent rainfall. U.S. Airmen from the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron are pumping storm floodwaters out of living areas and are building retention ponds to minimize mosquito outbreaks. (DoD photo by Airman 1st Class Jason Epley, U.S. Air Force/Released)

off a spectacular hostage rescue in Mogadishu in 1979. So we know the commandos can fight. Yet, according to *The Scotsman*, it seems that a three-year deployment to Afghanistan by the *Kommando Spezialkrafte* (KSK), a special operations force with the German Navy, was marked by utter inactivity. Apparently, 100 trained commandos were idle for the whole time!

A spokesman with the German Ministry of Defense disputed the report from Scotsman, claiming that "German Special Forces" participated in missions, but said he was unable to provide details.

How utterly disgusting!!! The wusses in the German government should have at least let the operators volunteer for ops, which they most certainly would have been thrilled to do. And, the question is, what the hell did they do for three years? – RKB

UNDEREQUIPPED BRITS?

The decline of the British military has been shocking. The Royal Navy's decline in recent years (to include selling off relatively new ships) was one of the most visible signs of this decline. However, the decline has hit other areas, and an officer with 23 SAS Regiment has resigned over inadequate equipment in the wake of the loss of four British Army personnel in Afghanistan, where their un-hardened tactical vehicle was destroyed by a land mine.

UNPREPARED FRENCH?

It seems that the British have not been the only ones dealing with a lack of preparedness while in Afghanistan. Worse, the French may have tried to cover it up by denying shortfalls existed! Internet journalist Michael Yon posted photos that back up reports in the press about a secret report that claims the French, who lost ten personnel (nine para-

Continued on page 80

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Kimber's Gold Combat II

By Gary Paul Johnston

A 1911 for the professional

Truly fine instruments never appear out of a vacuum, but are developed from an idea. Such was the case of John Moses Browning's timeless .45 ACP caliber Model of 1911 pistol. Stronger than ever, the 1911 remains king of the autopistols across the board

However, the Model of 1911 did not materialize overnight, but only on the heels of years of other Browning autopistol development. Even after the tremendous success of the 1911, the pistol was improved more than a decade later, as the Model of 1911A1, in which capacity it continued to serve the U.S. military until 1985. In fact, the 1911 continues to serves some Marine Corps special operations forces, as well as the special weapons and tactics (SWAT) units of many law enforcement agencies. One of the best known is the SWAT unit of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

The LAPD SWAT Kimber

Formed shortly after (the first) Watts riot (August 11, 1965), LAPD's SWAT unit soon was allowed to carry .45 ACP 1911-type pistols instead of the .38 Special revolver that was then standard issue. These guns were drawn from a variety of confiscated 1911 pistols, as well as those purchased by individual officers assigned to SWAT, all such pistols first certified by LAPD armorors. These roughly 100 pistols were of various makes, both G.I. and commercial, with an even greater number of "custom" features.

As the years passed, the 1911-type pistols used by the LAPD SWAT unit continued to shoot thousands of rounds per year in practice and required increasing maintenance.

Finally, in 2004, the LAPD agreed to purchase new 1911-type pistols for its SWAT unit in order to have all pistols uniform with regard to make, mode and features. After rigorously testing 1911-type pistols from six major manufacturers, the LAPD SWAT unit selected a special version of the Kimber Custom 1911 pistol, one with a dedicated SureFire Tactical Weapon Light. These guns are still issued to LAPD SWAT personnel.

The USMC Kimber

Not long after the LAPD SWAT unit adopted its special version of the .45ACP Kimber Custom 1911, the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) USMC's Detachment-1 (Det-1) followed suit with a Kimber Custom 1911 of its own design. In addition to the many custom features standard on the Kimber Custom, the USMC specified a number of additional custom features. These included a checkered front strap, Dawson Light Rail from Dawson Precision, G-10 "Gunner" Grips from Strider Knives, Novak Lo-Mount Sights and more. A special version of a SureFire Tactical Weapon Light and a custom Safariland Model 6400 Series Holster were part of the USMC's package.

Col. James Beard, US Army Special Forces (ret.), carried a 1911 for many years, and loved shooting the Gold Combat II.

The LAPD SIS Kimber

In the wake of the LAPD SWAT and the USMC adopting the Kimber 1911, the personnel of another specialized LAPD unit were taking note. These were members of the Special Investigation Section (SIS).

The SIS is a relatively small unit for a department with over 8,000 officers, whose hours of duty are 24/7 with everyone potentially on call. As with most small police units, in which long stakeouts and tailing suspects are standard operating procedure, this one generates extreme dedication. After operating for a number of years from several departmental entities and under as many names, SIS has been responsible for taking untold numbers of the worst criminals off the streets of L.A. Among these criminals was the famous "Hillside Strangler."

Adopted in four models, the Kimber SIS 1911 was approved for individual purchase by officers assigned to the SIS. The SIS model came with a host of custom features, one of which was Kimber's integral frame rail, a feature not available at the time the LAPD SWAT and USMC purchased their Kimbers. However, if you're wondering why all the Kimber history here, well, part of it is related to the evolutionary aspect mentioned above. But another part of it is a unique feature specified by SIS, and one never before seen on a production 1911 pistol.

The Gold Combat II is seen in the excellent Safariland 6377 holster, along with the revolutionary new Tomahawk Tactical Light from First-Light USA.

The Cocking Sight

For years there have been studies of retracting the slide of an autopistol by using a part of the slide or, more recently, the rear sight. If you're wondering about the likelihood of having to retract the slide by using the rear sight, the LAPD has done a large case study of the issue. Scenarios include one's strong hand or arm becoming disabled in a fight, having to manipulate the slide while driving with one hand, or holding onto something with the support hand, etc. The SIS asked Kimber to design a rear sight by which the slide could be retracted if necessary. Kimber did and the SIS trains to use this special rear sight should the necessity ever arise. This historical overview brings us to the subject at hand.

On the right side of the Gold Combat II's slide are the words, "CUSTOM SHOT." They're not kidding!

The Kimber Gold Combat II

Having made a practice of incorporating the best custom features in most if not all of its 1911-type pistols, Kimber has done it once again with a new 5" barrel 1911 it calls the Gold Combat II. Coming standard with all features found in the Custom II, the Gold Combat II also comes with most of the custom features found in the LAPD SWAT, USMC and SIS Kimbers. These features include both front and rear slide-cocking grooves, Meprolight Night Sights, an excellent undercut trigger guard with 30-lpi machine checkering on the bottom, 24-lpi machine checkered front strap, grooved flat top slide, ambidextrous thumb safety and magazine well extension. The pistol also comes with superb new G-10 grips and an optional frame rail, and can be had in either matte black KimPro finish or matte stainless steel. But that's not all.

Bushingless Barrel

Pioneered in the early 1980's by Charles C. Kelsey of Devel, and Irv

Continued on page 75

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Kimber's Gold Combat II Continued from page 73

Stone of BAR-STO Precision Machine, the 1911 bushingless barrel is nothing new. However, the stainless steel version used by Kimber is far and away the most improved bushingless barrel system I've yet seen, and it provides match accuracy in addition to putting slightly more weight forward. Yes, it does use a full-length recoil spring guide rod, but while I have no use for these in conventional 1911 pistols, I have no problem with this one. This is because the pistol does not require a "special" tool to field strip it (a paper clip will do). Unlike a standard bushing system, one could literally rinse debris out of the Gold Combat II with its slide locked back by pouring water from a canteen.

However, to completely fieldstrip the Gold Combat II, first remove the magazine and ensure the chamber is empty. As Ron Avery stresses, "Nothing in its mouth and nothing to feed it." Next draw back the slide to slide lock and insert the short end of the "L"-shaped pin (furnished) into the exposed tiny hole in the guide rod. Then draw back the slide to its disassembly notch and push the slide stop pin partially out from the right side. Now pull it out the rest of the way from the left while holding the slide back slightly. Without depressing the grip safety, simply remove the slide group off the front of the frame as a unit.

With the slide removed, the recoil spring guide and its captive spring and the above pin can be withdrawn to the rear. The barrel can then be withdrawn out the front and the pistol can be cleaned and lubricated as needed. No further disassembly is necessary or recommended, although the firing pin can also be removed with proper instruction. Could I live with the Gold Combat II out of the box? You bet, but there's more.

Continued on page 76

The Gold Combat II was perfectly at home in BlackHawk's Tactical Serpa Holster, which also holds a spare magazine and the SureFire light seen here.

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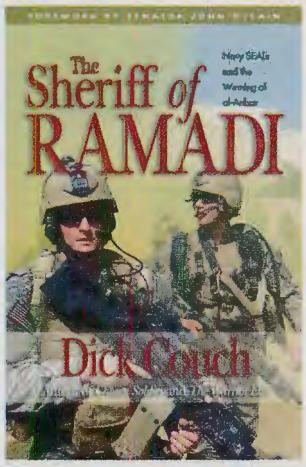

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"I had never worked with warriors of such high caliber. ... The losses that the SEALs suffered in Ramadi cemented that relationship in my mind. Anyone who shed blood, sweat, and tears in Ramadi with us will always be a part of our band of brothers."
— *COL. SEAN MACFARLAND, Commander 1st Brigade Combat Team, Ramadi 1st Armored Division, 2006-2007*

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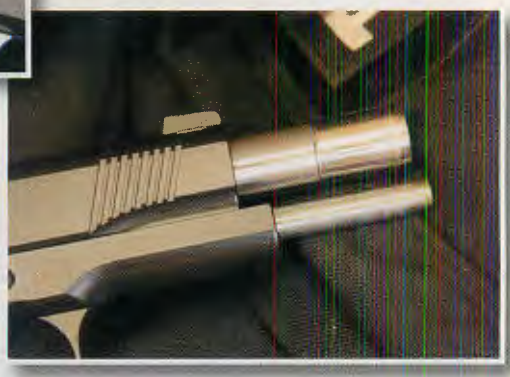
Kimber's Gold Combat II

Continued from page 75

The SIS Rear Sight

In addition to all of the above features, the Kimber Gold Combat II comes with the exact slide-cocking Meprolight rear sight as is standard issue with the LAPD's SIS Kimber pistol. This is essentially Kimber's standard rear sight, redesigned with a ledge that allows it to be used to retract the slide. As good looking as it is functional, this sight will never get in the way even if you never use it, but don't take slide cocking lightly. The act requires lots of practice to be done safely, especially if the edge of one's holster is used to catch the sight on. Exposing one's body to injury is highly likely, not to mention the difficulty of using a belt with the sight!



Above: The Gold Combat II comes with perfect checkering on the bottom of its trigger guard and front strap, along with a magazine well extension and unique Micarta grips.
Left: The Gold Combat II's "SIS" rear sight can be used to cock the slide if necessary.
Below: The unique muzzle of the Gold Combat II's barrel is seen here. It locks up perfectly.

The rear sight is most likely to be used for cocking during a malfunction, and that is the way I would train my people, with strict emphasis on placement of the trigger finger and not covering one's body with the muzzle. Better and far safer things to use for sight cocking are a steering wheel, doorframe or other available fixed object.

Tactical Lights

Since my sample black KimPro Gold Combat II came without a frame rail, I tested it with both SureFire hand-held tactical lights and First-Light's new Tomahawk Light. Being used to conventional hand-held lights, I still found the Tomahawk to offer several solutions to problems law enforcement officers face, not the least of which is allowing the hand to be free while still holding the light, as well as having an instant strobe function.

Holsters

The Gold Combat II was right at home in BlackHawk's Serpa and Tactical Serpa holsters and Safariland's new Model 6377 and 6378 security holsters. Designed by Bill Rogers, the Model 6377 (shown), with its suede lining, is one of the finest, most secure and fastest holsters I've used.

Trigger Time

The Gold Combat II's sight picture is as good as any conventional combat sights and the ambidextrous thumb safety worked perfectly. I was even able to depress the grip safety sufficiently when shooting high thumb. Magazines fell free when released and could be inserted in a flash into the gun's magazine well extension. The trigger of my sample Gold Combat II had a crisp letoff of a hair over 3 pounds, which contributed to the accuracy obtained with the gun.

Left: Ready for complete disassembly, the Gold Combat II is seen with its special pin securing its recoil spring. Right: The Gold Combat II is seen field stripped using only the small pin to secure its recoil spring.

Recoil was manageable even when shooting .45 ACP +P ammunition of various makes and bullet weights, such as 230-grain JHP by Federal and COR-BON. Both of these provided exceptional accuracy, with most hand-held 5-shot groups hovering about 2 inches at 25 yards. Match grade 230-grain .45 ACP ammunition did even better, with 5 shots often going into just over one inch. No malfunctions of any kind were experienced with the Gold Combat II. Other than the frame rail and stainless steel 5" barrel Gold Combat II pistols, no other versions are offered.

Whether you're a professional who uses a pistol for duty, one who likes to invest in fine handguns, or somewhere in between, I'm sure you'll agree that this new Kimber is as good as gold. For information on Kimber's new Gold Combat II and all their superb firearms, contact Kimber Mfg., One Lawton St., Dept. SOF, Yonkers, NY 10705, (800) 880-2418 (kimberamerica.com).

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FROM AN AIR FORCE CREW CHIEF

This trip is almost over. This entire trip has been the same, as in what we do each day. Mine has gone something like this:
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0000: Get on the van and head to work to get my briefing and flight schedule.
0015 until 1245: Launch and recover and any maintenance on the jets.
1245: Head "home," change into PT gear and walk to the chow-hall, eat, back to the room, shower and try to get to bed by 1500.

EACH DAY JUST WRAPS INTO THE NEXT

The next day....all over again..and again..and again..and again. We can only break the cycle by doing things like spending time at the hospital as volunteers, or at the REC center. Trips like this, and the last several I have been on are hard, maybe not as hard as what our Vietnam and prior war soldiers have gone through, but hard in a different way. There is still the stress of the task, the long hours and lack of comforts. Those things you have to see and hear. Then there are the chances of being injured or killed, whether it be from a mortar blast or shot by one of the insurgent snipers who like to fire thru the chain-link fence that surrounds the base. This war is much different than those past. We are fighting differently, and the enemy is using different tactics, but you still find yourself using those "basic skills" that we are taught early on in our military careers to stay alive.

THE UNAPPRECIATED, "*WOUNDED*" VIETNAM VETS

One thing that happens in the States is that I have "Vets" come up to me and thank me for what I do...and I greatly appreciate that, because I know what we are doing is important, and I recognize that as well as the huge difference we are making here in Iraq. Yet it's hard for me to imagine what the Vietnam vets went thru...they are the ones who did their tours which were much tougher. And they did not have near the support we have from the American citizens— a support is what keeps us going, deployment after deployment.

Today marks my 213th day in Iraq, and my 478th day deployed to this war. My tour started with launching F-16's out of Turkey for Operation Northern Watch, then on to Qatar for Operation Iraqi Freedom, to where I am today, in Balad, Iraq for the third time. I am tired and ready to go home. This might be my last day in Iraq. I am not sure where the future will send me, Afghanistan? Iraq?

Everyone has their opinion on this war. Many of those opinions are based on emotion and what those who hold the opinions hear from the media and politicians. As I have said before, listen to your soldiers. We have seen this war firsthand and know the difference we are making. Please take my word that we need to be here!

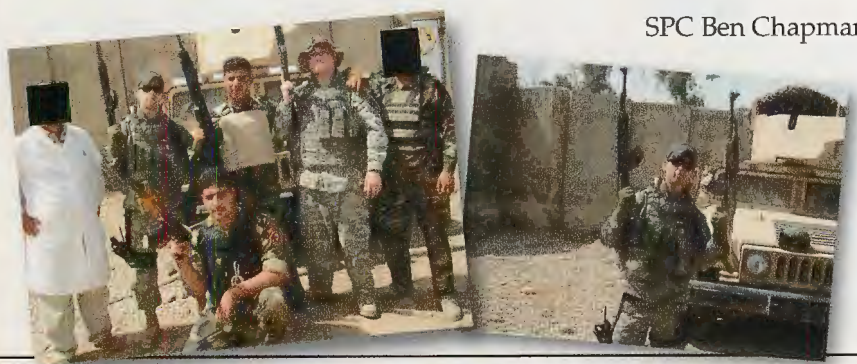
Here is a group photo of all of our guys.

TSgt. Ronald W. Stokes
Balad, Iraq

SOF BOOSTS MORALE

Just wanted to say that getting *SOF* here is a major morale boost in the unit. Keep them coming. I'm a combat medic in Mosul, Iraq on the end of a fifteen month tour, and *SOF* has been here through it all. Thanks again.

SPC Ben Chapman



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SAFARILAND MODEL RK-M4 RAIL KIT

Safariland announces today the addition of the Model RK-M4 Rail Kit, to the company's extensive variety of duty, tactical and concealment holsters and accessories.

Attaching to three different rails simultaneously, the new Model RK-M4 Rail Kit allows for quick attachment of rails to the forward end of AR-15, M4 and M16 rifles. Providing added versatility which allows users to customize the rail for their individual needs, the new Model RK-M4 can attach two accessories to the upper forearm and one to the bottom rail.

Contact: Safariland, 3120 E. Mission Blvd., Ontario, CA 91761
Phone: (800)347-1200 • Web: www. Safariland.com

TRU-SPEC 24-7 SERIES

TRU-SPEC by Atlanco has added several ultra-comfortable, lightweight items to its extremely popular 24-7 Series of duty/casual apparel. Like the original 24-7 cotton pants which were first introduced at the 2008 SHOT Show and quickly carved out a large share of the market, the new 24-7 items have been inspired by the multi-function trousers and other apparel commonly worn by many police tactical teams, but all 24-7 items have been designed for both style and function and they easily cross the line between on-duty and off-duty wear.

Contact: TRU-SPEC, 1125 Hayes Industrial Drive, Marietta, GA 30062-2448
PH: 1.800.241.9414 or 1.770.427.1334
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INOVA INFORCE LED HANDHELD LIGHTING SYSTEMS

INOVA® INFORCE™ LED Handheld Lighting Systems render all tactical options available when preparing any mission. From all purpose white light with built-in CQB strobe™ and search and rescue beacon to mission-specific programmable color selection and light intensity, the INFORCE does it all. Features include high-performance LEDs, proprietary regulation circuitry, advanced TIROS® lens, ultra-light carbon composite body, and o-ring seals making it waterproof to 66 feet. In addition, it's MOLLE compatible, MIL-STD-1913 rail mountable, MIL-STD-810F tested.

Contact: INOVA, Special Projects Division, 135 Circuit Drive, North Kingstown, RI 02852
Phone: (401)294-2030 ext. 212
E-mail: info@inova-mil.com
Web: www.inova-mil.com

CAA COUNTDOWN MAGAZINE

The Count Down magazine from CAA has a visual, color-coded indicator showing the exact number of rounds left in the magazine. 30-20 rounds have a green background, 19-10 rounds have a yellow back ground, and 9-1 rounds have a red background. In addition, there is a second indicator on the bottom of the magazine. The numbers are self-illuminated for low-light conditions and the operator does not have to shift positions to see the indicator. The magazine and round count indicator are both ambidextrous and ergonomic.

Contact: Command Arms Accessories, 76 Vincent Circle, Ivyland, PA 18974
Phone: 267-803-1517
Email: info@commandarms.com
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troopers and a member of the French Foreign Legion) in an August ambush, were also unprepared and under-equipped.

WANAT FOLLOW-UP

In another follow-up, this time on a somewhat better note, a report has been released on the Wanat firefight on 13 July, 2008, in which nine members of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade, were killed in action. The report appears to confirm earlier reports that cast doubt on mainstream media outlets' claims American paratroopers were defeated. To the contrary, the enemy forces never overran the observation post (where eight of the paratroopers were killed), nor did they overrun the patrol base. The bad news: Some local authorities were apparently complicit in the attack, possibly because of Taliban coercion.

A gun team from Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, braces for the concussion as it fires a 105mm howitzer during Operation Balls Jackson I, 9 October, 2008. The artillery Soldiers' role in the operation was to set up and fire an artillery barrage in order to deny enemy extraction routes for an air assault operation 10 kilometers away. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny, USA.

USS *MICHAEL MONSOOR*

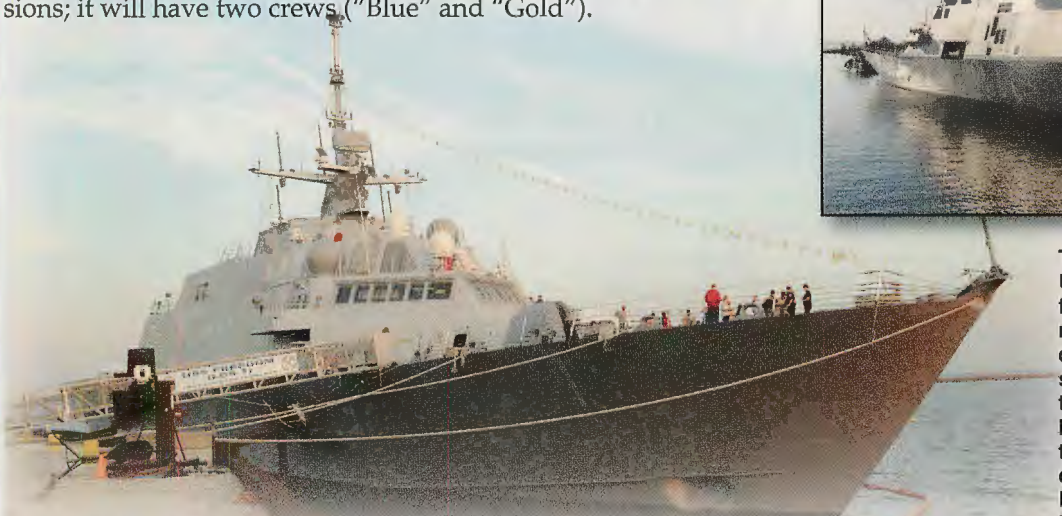
The latest *Zumwalt*-class destroyer will be named USS *Michael Monsoor*, a Medal of Honor recipient from Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is a well-deserved honor for this American hero, who covered a grenade during fighting in Ramadi, and who appeared on the cover of *SOF*. When will we see the Navy announce the USS *Brad Kasal*, USS *Marcus Luttrell*, and USS *Joshua Chiarini*?

A photo illustration of the Zumwalt-class destroyer USS *Michael Monsoor* (DDG 1001). The ship will be named after Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Michael Monsoor (SEAL) who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during combat on 29 September, 2006 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq. (U.S. Navy illustration by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Kevin S. O'Brien/Released)

USS *FREEDOM* JOINS THE NAVY

The Navy commissioned USS *Freedom*, the first of its Littoral Combat Ships, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on 8 November. This new ship is fast, can operate in shallower water than current navy vessels, and can be equipped with all sorts of gear for a variety of missions; it will have two crews ("Blue" and "Gold").

The littoral combat ship USS *Freedom* (LCS 1), the first ship in the Navy's new Littoral Combat Ship class, prepares to go to sea to begin acceptance trials. The Navy's Board of Inspection and Survey team will conduct the acceptance trials in Lake Michigan. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jhi L. Scott/Released)



USS *Freedom* (LCS 1) berths in Milwaukee harbor preparing for her commissioning on 8 November, 2008. USS *Freedom* (LCS 1) is the first of two littoral combat ships being produced for the Navy. Freedom is an innovative combatant designed to operate quickly in shallow water environments to counter challenging threats, specifically mines, submarines and fast surface craft. U.S. Navy photo by John Sheppard (Released)

DON'T FORGET US CONTRACTORS!!

I have been a lifelong fan of *SOF* since I was a young private in the US Army. I am now a retired 19 Delta from West Virginia.

I have been operating inside Iraq since 2004. I have worked with and learned a lot from individuals who have written several books such as *Firepower* and most recently *Dirty Combat*.

My counterpart from South Africa and I operate country wide under the cover of a logistical/cargo company part time and live among the local population in a normal house without any security. This works well as it doesn't bring any attention to us.

The real score is making and brokering deals and deliveries (money, equipment) that are of a sensitive nature where the US Government and anyone associated with it cannot be directly involved.

We operate in such areas as Mosul, Kirkuk, Erbil, Sulmania, Tikrit, and Baghdad without any backup of any kind (i.e., armored vehicles and large PSDs). We operate as a two-man team with only 9mm's and AKs, dressed as locals. Over the years we have learned Arabic and Kurdish, which has allowed us to now operate without an interpreter and better blend in.

I have attached a picture of myself just outside of Mosul in front of a sign that makes me laugh every time I pass it.

It has been a goal of mine to make the pages of *SOF* magazine. All the attention in the media is on our men and women in uniform – that's as it should be and they have my full support and respect as they have taken on a heavy burden.

But the behind-the-scenes operators like myself need our story to be told.

Regards
Mr. Smith

Well, Mr. Smith, we have helped you meet your goal of being in the pages of SOF.

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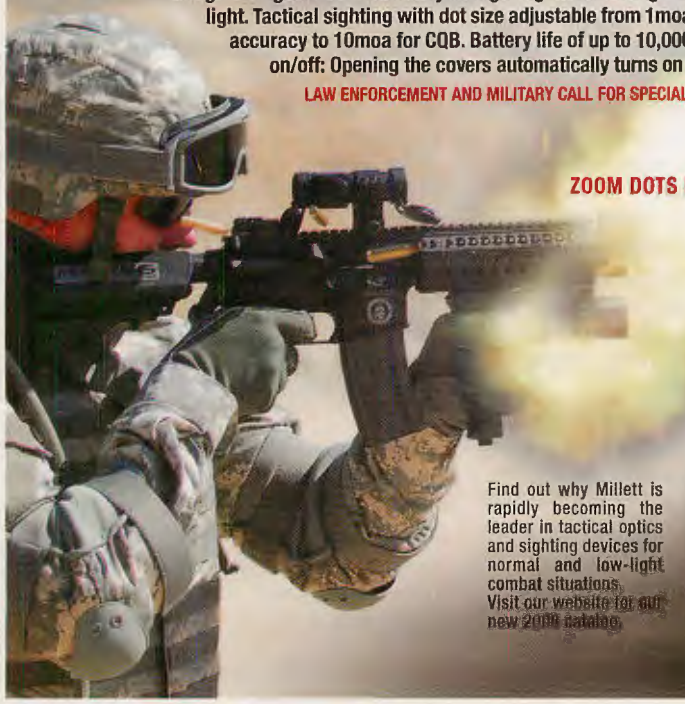

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by Lt. Col. Oliver North, USMC (Ret.)

Protect and Defend

GULFPORT, Miss. "We're the heart of the U.S. military. Our sons and daughters serve, and our neighbors build military ships." That's how a fan put it this week [7 November] as I autographed a copy of *American Heroes* for him during a book-signing session. Then he added, "I hope that doesn't change." He has reason for concern, as do those who work at nearby Pascagoula Naval Shipyard or Keesler Air Force Base or who serve anywhere in our nation's uniform.

President-elect Barack Obama said on election night that "change has come to America." Though the next commander in chief has yet to announce exactly how he will do it, he clearly intends to change the commitments, capabilities and cost of America's military.

—Commitments: Candidate Obama made "ending the war and getting out of Iraq" the centerpiece of his foreign policy platform from the very beginning of his campaign two years ago. He never has recanted on his goal of "bringing our troops home within 16 months of taking office." He is also adamant that more U.S. and NATO troops are needed in Afghanistan.

Thanks to the courage and perseverance of young Americans in flak jackets, helmets and flight suits, the campaign against radical Islam in Mesopotamia is all but over. Iraqi soldiers and police now carry out most combat operations against Sunni and Shiite terrorists and militias. A phased pullout from Iraq will indeed free up U.S. combat units for Afghanistan, where they are needed.

But a "total pullout" from Iraq invites the theocrats in Tehran, who are the world leaders in exporting terror and are intent on acquiring nuclear weapons, to further ambition and adventure in the region. This week, Iraq's foreign minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, obviously concerned about a premature U.S. retreat, said that candidate Obama "reassured us that he would not take any drastic or dramatic decisions." In case the point was missed, he added: "When there is a reality check, I think any U.S. president has to look very hard at the facts on the ground. The gains that we have attained and won with hard struggle and a great deal of sacrifice need to be sustained."

Let's hope that before he pulls the plug on the "Land Between the Rivers," the new commander in chief will listen carefully to the counsel of Gens. David Petraeus and Ray Odierno in Iraq and David McKiernan in Afghanistan. Making decisions now about force dispositions after inauguration may well placate his far-left base, but could well prove disastrous for the nation.

—Capabilities: Even before the election, leading Democrats in the House and Senate were prognosticating a "transformation" in U.S. defense capabilities. The two most recent Democratic presidents made similar promises. When Jimmy Carter came to office, he all but eliminated our human intelligence capabilities and ordered an across-the-board reduction of 15 percent in everything from ships to planes to "end strength"—the number of soldiers, sailors, airmen, guardsmen and Marines in the services.

Bill Clinton did the same thing, only bigger. Half the Army's divisions disappeared, along with scores of ships and combat air wings. He also introduced the "don't ask, don't tell" policy to allow gays to serve in the armed forces.

The net effect of both presidents' capabilities cuts was to embolden America's adversaries. Arguably, American troops still are paying in blood for the cost cutting done during the Carter and Clinton administrations. That may well be happening again, in an ever-more dangerous world.

—Cost Cutting: When the moving vans roll up to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in January, it will be the first time since Richard Nixon took over from Lyndon Johnson that our nation has changed its commander in chief while at war. Yet leaks from the Obama transition team and Capitol Hill indicate that cuts in defense spending are a top priority.

Pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq would "save" $10 billion per month. Further "savings" can be found by cutting production of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the F-22 Raptor, Virginia-class nuclear attack submarines, the V-22 Osprey and the DDG-1000 destroyer. Converting the national missile defense system back to a basic research program, eliminating two Air Force fighter wings, and putting a naval carrier strike group in mothballs would "save" hundreds of billions more. Rep. Barney Frank, chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, has called for a 25 percent reduction—about $150 billion—in the Pentagon's budget, and said, "We don't need all these fancy new weapons."

Any of these cuts will have the effect of seriously reducing U.S. defense capabilities. One parochial example: The V-22 Osprey is programmed to replace all of the U.S. Marines' 40-year-old CH-46 helicopters. Without the Osprey, Marines will have to walk to the next gunfight.

In his first remarks as president-elect, Obama promised defeat to "those who would tear the world down." If that's what he really wants to do, prudence dictates that he ought not start by tearing apart our nation's defenses.

Oliver North is the host of "War Stories" on Fox News Channel, the founder and honorary chairman of Freedom Alliance, and the author of American Heroes. *To find out more about Oliver North and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.*

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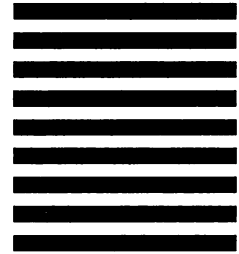

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